

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE
CONTRIBUTION TO AUSTRALIAN
STRING PEDAGOGY AND
PERFORMANCE OF JAN SEDIVKA

BY

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ABSTRACT

The doctoral exegesis presented here has assessed the contribution to Australian string performance and pedagogy of Jan Sedivka, Professor of Violin for almost forty years at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music. The exegesis examines and documents the pedagogical philosophy, content, and process of Jan Sedivka. A biographical overview of his musical life and a brief outline of significant developments in the evolution of the Australian string culture precede a literature review.

The methodology employed in this research included questionnaires, an extensive series of interviews and many hours of observation. The interviews were conducted with Sedivka and his former students from each five-year period of his teaching in Australia, in addition to prominent associates and colleagues. Sedivka's significant contribution to string performance and pedagogy has emerged from his role in the development of string teaching infrastructures in Australia, and a legacy of highly individual students, many of whom have become leading educators. His approach to left-hand teaching has also been explored. This exegesis is the first attempt to provide a comprehensive view of Sedivka's place in Australian string culture.

The research undertaken has revealed that Sedivka's pedagogical style is unique and that he does not subscribe to any prescribed teaching method. He employs student-centred learning responsive to the individual needs and skill base of his students. Through the skilful employment of language techniques, including analogy and conundrum, Sedivka has the ability to fundamentally alter the cognitive and psychomotor behaviour of musicians. Sedivka's direct influence and that mediated through his students has had a profound impact on the development and levels of attainment in string performance and pedagogy in Australia.

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FOREWORD

Violin performance and pedagogy have been a central thread in my life for many years. The art of communicating something you love to others, is a very special occupation. I became interested in the work of Jan Sedivka as a young student violinist in Western Australia, where the knowledge of the existence of a ‘great old master’ living in Tasmania was in the back of my mind. My first encounter with Sedivka occurred when I participated in one of his master classes. During this class a contemporary of mine performed the first movement of the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto and I heard my first *Sedivkaism* “the worse the octaves sound, the closer they are to being in tune.” I found this thought most amusing and heartening at the time! I once again encountered ‘the old man’ at a Spring Chamber Music Camp, where three of Perth’s leading string teachers, plus Sedivka, were engaged in a heated discussion about the use of the right-hand fingers in the performance of unaccompanied Bach. At the time Sedivka and his former student Peter Exton argued for the negative team while Gregory Baron and Alan Bonds worked for the affirmative. (Readers note; Sedivka would have been just as happy and capable to argue for the other side if the opportunity had presented itself!)

In 1988, Peter Exton became my principal violin teacher and for two years ‘the boss’ oversaw my lessons with his unsmiling photographic front. In 1996, at the suggestion of Peter, I travelled to Melbourne to meet Jan Sedivka and again encountered that generous, alternative, argumentative, grey-haired gentleman who was so dear to the string fraternity of Australia. The ideas he presented were new, challenging and seemingly unconventional. I also discovered a teacher whose methods intrigued me; he did not say what one would necessarily expect or desire.

The experiences described above led me to the idea that I would like to attempt to unravel the truths of this teacher and in 1998 I moved to Tasmania to study with ‘the master’ and to commence my doctorate. My interest in Sedivka’s pedagogical style was motivated further by the glaring differences in playing style between violinists in Western Australia and in Tasmania. I also could not believe how

many players of a high calibre there were in Hobart, in relation to the size of the city, and how these players exhibited a technical and musical ease of playing. The phrases of the Tasmanian string players seemed to breathe and to have a natural ebb and flow. I was also very aware, however, of the immense individuality of each player in terms of sound, technique and physical set-up. The combination of the factors thus described created a set of unanswered questions that became catalysts for my interest and the doctoral project presented here was born.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 An introduction to Jan Sedivka

Jan Boleslav Sedivka was born on 8 September 1917 in Slany, Czechoslovakia, a small town approximately thirty kilometres north-west of Prague. After holding influential violin teaching posts in London (1949-1961) and Brisbane (1961-1965), he became Lecturer in Violin and Chamber Music at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music in 1966. From 1972 to 1982 he was the Director of Music of the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, at the University of Tasmania.¹ In 1982 Sedivka became the Master Musician in Residence at the same institution, a position still held, two decades later.² In an assessment of Sedivka's profound influence, the *Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, stated

A charismatic personality and remarkably successful pedagogue, he built a string school at [*sic*] Tasmania which for nearly 30 years has been the most important in Australia, producing a startling number of successful professional players.³

Sedivka has been widely regarded as one of Australia's leading violinists and string teachers. In the absence of a major authoritative study of his work, the aim of this exegesis is to document the pedagogical style of Sedivka; outlining the unique aspects of his teaching and his impact on the Australian string scene. The scope of the exegesis is to examine, in the context of other great masters of violin performance, pedagogy and contemporary pedagogical thought, the pedagogical belief system and methodology of Professor Sedivka.

¹ The Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music became a part of the University of Tasmania in 1981, before this, it was within the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education.

² Within the Faculty of Arts.

³ "Sedivka, Jan," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, 1997 ed. Warren Bebbington.

1.2 National and international recognition

The contribution that Sedivka has made to the string life of Australia has been formally recognised in many ways. In 1987 Sedivka was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for his outstanding service to the Australian music community. Sedivka is an Honorary Fellow of the Trinity College of Music, London, and has an Honorary Doctor of Letters from the University of Tasmania. He is an Honorary Professor at the Shanghai Conservatorium of Music and was awarded the same distinction in 1995 from the University of Tasmania. Sedivka is also an Honorary Citizen of the Royal City of Slany and was awarded an Honorary Fellowship in Music from the Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB) in 1994. Two years later, he was awarded the Sir Bernard Heinze Memorial Award by the University of Melbourne, for his outstanding contribution to Australian music, and the Memorial Gold Medal of the Prague Academy of Musical Arts. In addition to being awarded life membership of the Australian String Teachers' Association (AUSTA), in 1988 AUSTA awarded Sedivka the medal for distinguished service to string teaching in Australia.

1.3 Literature published about Jan Sedivka

As a performer, and more specifically as a teacher, Sedivka has been the subject of little written documentation. The *Oxford Companion to Australian Music* contains a detailed article by Leon Stemler, about the musical development of Hobart.⁴ The final section of this article deals with the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music and, as would be expected, Sedivka features prominently. Stemler states that

Sedivka's appointment was particularly significant, not only because of the European heritage and teaching traditions he represented (he had studied with Ševčík, Thibaud and Rostal), but also because of the chamber music he brought to Tasmania, in recital with his wife, pianist Beryl Sedivka (a pupil of Ciampi

⁴ Leon Stemler, "Hobart," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, 1997 ed.

and Solomon) and with cellist Sela Trau (a pupil of Feuermann) as the Tasmanian Conservatorium Trio. The influence of these three European-trained musicians on the musical life of Tasmania has been incalculable.

The article continues with an account of the development of the Conservatorium under the influence of Sedivka as the Director, and under the administration of subsequent directors. The focus of the article was Sedivka's role as a performer and administrator, with only passing references to his teaching role.

Another article in the *Oxford Companion to Australian Music* was devoted entirely to Sedivka.⁵ In this article, his journey from Prague to Hobart was traced. It also mentioned his wife, pianist Beryl Sedivka, with whom he performed extensively. The article ends with a list of some of the major awards Sedivka has received throughout his lifetime.

Sedivka was recognised in *Who's Who in Australia 2001*,⁶ a major Australian Biographical Dictionary and Register of Prominent People, and in the 1994/5 edition of the *International Who's Who in Music*.⁷ Both articles listed Sedivka's qualifications and academic positions, his birth date, his education and his many career highlights, as well as documenting his parents' lives. The publications also included Sedivka's violin teachers, chamber music groups and awards. In addition, the international edition included a listing of prominent commercial recordings that Sedivka has made.

The impact Sedivka had in Australia, soon after his arrival, is apparent in James Glennon's book, *Australian Music and Musicians*, published in 1968. Jan and Beryl Sedivka arrived in 1961 and the book was published after they had spent seven years in Australia, only three of these being in Tasmania. Glennon cites Sedivka as one of Hobart's most prominent musicians and details a brief profile of his musical activities, including leading the Tasmanian Conservatorium Trio and

⁵ "Sedivka, Jan," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, 1997 ed.

⁶ "Sedivka, Jan," in the *Who's Who in Australia 2001*, 2000 ed.

being a former member of the London Instrumental [*sic*] Trio.⁸ Although Sedivka was mentioned as the “chief violin study teacher”⁹ of the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, Glennon’s emphasis was on Sedivka’s contribution as a performer.

In 1975 Leon Stemler wrote an article entitled “The Tasmanian String Summer School” in *The Australian Journal of Music Education*.¹⁰ The summer school was a two-week annual event held in Hobart from 1971-1989, under the direction of Sedivka, designed to attract student, amateur and semi-professional string players to Tasmania.¹¹ In the article, Stemler noted that after only four years of the school, the seminars had become specifically oriented towards “the handling of problems in a teaching situation.”¹²

The volume *Festschrift Jan Sedivka*, published in 1982, was compiled to honour Sedivka at the time of his retirement as Director of the Conservatorium of Music. It included articles by colleagues, friends, performers, teachers and composers, all of whom had had a close association with Sedivka. The Preface by Peter Scott and the Forward by Rex Hobcroft gave two glowing personal tributes to Sedivka. Scott spoke of Sedivka’s “acute and sensitive mind imbued with the highest standards,” and believed that

Teachers of the individual are indeed most fortunate, as of course are their students, if like Jan they combine technical mastery with versatility, perception, and imagination. Jan’s influence on string playing extends to every major orchestra in Australia and many overseas. He formed the internationally acclaimed Petra String Quartet, the only resident quartet of graduate students in Australia. Among his former students

⁷ *International Who’s Who in Music*, 1994/95 ed., s. v. “Sedivka, Jan.”

⁸ James Glennon, *Australian Music and Musicians* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1968), 228, 252.

The correct name for the trio was the London International Trio.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 228.

¹⁰ Leon Stemler, “The Tasmanian String Summer School,” *The Australian Journal of Music Education* (May 1975): 19-20.

¹¹ For a more detailed discussion of the Tasmanian String Summer School, see Chapter Two (2.6).

¹² Stemler, 20.

scattered across four continents are concert violinists, conductors, concertmasters, composers, professors, lecturers and directors of music in state education authorities.¹³

Rex Hobcroft began his association with the Sedivkas in Brisbane, before the former became the Director of the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music. Once appointed to this position, Hobcroft invited Sedivka to Hobart to work for him. His tribute, in the form of the Forward, is a personal salute to Sedivka within a biographical sketch of his journey. Hobcroft detailed Sedivka's influence and how "string students literally started flocking to Hobart from all States and in a short time the Tasmanian Conservatorium became the mecca for the string players in Australia."¹⁴ He also documented the years when Sedivka was the Director of the Conservatorium and stated that they were "almost ideal musical years when the bureaucratic nonsense that goes with running a conservatorium was probably as minimal as it ever has been in Australia, and, as a result, music flourished."¹⁵

In addition to the references already mentioned, there have been vignettes, tributes, a video portrait and many passing references. However, there has not been a detailed analytical investigation into Sedivka's pedagogical influence in Australia. The beginnings of a more serious study of Sedivka's influence appeared in a thesis by Philippe Borer, entitled *Aspects of European Influences on Violin Playing and Teaching in Australia*.¹⁶ In his work, Borer examined the European influences on Australian string performance and pedagogy, and gave a brief overview of Sedivka's pedagogical philosophies. In his investigation into the influence of European schools of violin playing, Borer concluded that it was the Central European schools that constituted the mainstream influence in Australia and that they had "been instrumental in the awakening and present striking development of Australian native talent."¹⁷ Borer examined the evolution of

¹³ David Mercer, ed., *Festschrift Jan Sedivka* (Hobart: University of Tasmania, 1982), Preface.

¹⁴ Ibid., Foreword.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Philip Borer, *Aspects of European Influences on Violin Playing and Teaching in Australia* (Hobart: University of Tasmania, Masters of Music Thesis, 1989).

¹⁷ Ibid., 61.

European Schools of violin playing from their origins in Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713) and Giuseppe Tartini (1692-1770), their characteristics, and their respective impact in Australia.

In his discussion of Sedivka, Borer presented two musical portraits of violinists and teachers from the Czech School of violin playing; one of Sedivka himself and another of Lyndall Hendrickson (b. 1917), who was active for a large part of her teaching career in South Australia. Finally, Borer described his personal experience of advanced studies in violin playing with Sedivka and briefly documented some of Sedivka's pedagogical tenets. The exegesis documented here will substantially extend the preliminary work begun by Borer on Sedivka.

According to Borer, it is Sedivka's personal philosophy that has shaped his strikingly original approach to violin pedagogy. He quoted Sedivka as saying

It is, wherever possible, more rewarding to learn from direct research and observation of life phenomena – which include oneself, others and even animals with their admirable senso-motor co-ordination, rather from arbitrary ideas of often blindly accepted authorities which tend to block the channels of one's creative enquiry.¹⁸

In an examination of Sedivka's pedagogical approach, Borer identified two strands, firstly the analytical approach and secondly the Gestalt or the holistic approach. Borer alluded to the fact that Sedivka did not believe that repetition and hard work alone could improve violinistic technique.¹⁹ According to Borer, Sedivka thought that the use of the imagination, applied intelligence and patience could overcome the most arduous violinistic problems.²⁰

Borer documented that one of Sedivka's main pedagogical concerns was "the development in each individual of the innate talent, by solving the multitudinous

¹⁸ Jan Sedivka, quoted in Borer, 69.

¹⁹ Borer, 77.

technical as well as psychological problems of the student.”²¹ Sedivka has viewed learning as “fundamentally a situation of change, transformation, even metamorphosis.”²² Borer also documented an infamous belief held by Sedivka that nothing is, as it seems, and that difficulty is merely a perceived belief and should be viewed as a novelty to be embraced, enjoyed and understood.²³

An article written at the time of Borer’s thesis submission was “*The Boss*,” an affectionate name used by many of Sedivka’s students, written in 1987, by David Hirst. This article outlined a biographical sketch of Sedivka and concluded with Hirst’s understanding of Sedivka’s notion of the role of the teacher:

The role of the teacher should not be over emphasised.
That, in a sense, the teacher and student are on the same
road together. Their journey must be open ended in
order to keep the art alive.²⁴

In 1990, Lyndal Edmiston and Leon Stemler wrote a volume to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music. Edmiston described the impetus for the book in the acknowledgments: “The opportunity presented itself to reflect on the Conservatorium’s achievements, the life-long accommodation dilemma, and our community responsibility to make realistic judgements about future directions.”²⁵ As an influential figure in the history of the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, Sedivka featured prominently in this volume.

Another reflection of the community’s interest in the work of Sedivka was illustrated in an article published in *The Bulletin*, in 1993, written by one of Sedivka’s former violin students, Shirley Apthorp.²⁶ The article detailed

²⁰ Ibid., 90.

²¹ Ibid., 91.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ David Hirst, “The Boss,” *Press Press*, Autumn (1987): 21.

²⁵ Lyndal Edmiston and Leon Stemler, *Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, Beginning the journey, the first 25 years* (Hobart: University of Tasmania, 1990), Acknowledgments.

²⁶ Shirley Apthorp, “Maestro’s popularity upset Queensland,” *The Bulletin* (18 June 1993): 111.

Sedivka's migration experience from Czechoslovakia to Australia and focused on the difficulties the Sedivkas faced in Queensland in the early 1960s. The conservative musical community of Brisbane in the 1960s found it difficult to accept the extremely 'new' pedagogical and philosophical ideas that Jan Sedivka brought to Australia. This, in conjunction with the fact that eight students followed Sedivka from the United Kingdom to Australia, led to a certain level of mistrust in Queensland. While, in Europe, the decision to follow a particular teacher was an established tradition, in Australia in the 1960s it was almost unheard of.

In 1995, a journalist for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Judy Tierney, produced a documentary for the *7.30 Report* that focused on Sedivka at the time he received the Sir Bernard Heinze Memorial Award.²⁷ Tierney interviewed Sedivka and included footage of Jan and Beryl performing in the comfortable surroundings of their home. In addition, Sedivka is shown giving Barbara Jane Gilby a violin lesson.²⁸ Sedivka describes Gilby, as he does all of his students, as one of "his kids."²⁹ Gilby stated in the documentary that it was wonderful to be involved with someone who was "one hundred percent obsessed by music and violin playing, someone who has an all consuming passion for musical excellence."³⁰ Sedivka was also asked whether he felt he would have received more fame and fortune if he had remained in a major European centre, which Sedivka believed, was a possibility.

In 1996, Louise Oxley interviewed Sedivka at his Kingston home, in Hobart, and the transcript was published in *Siglo*.³¹ Oxley began the article with a brief biographical sketch of Sedivka and stated that "he made Tasmania an internationally recognised centre of string teaching, reversing the trend for young

²⁷ Jan Sedivka, interviewed by Judy Tierney, December 1995 on the ABC's *7.30 Report*.

²⁸ The Concertmaster of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra (1984-2000), now Lecturer in Violin and Viola at the Canberra School of Music.

²⁹ Jan Sedivka, interviewed by Judy Tierney, December 1995 on the ABC's *7.30 Report*.

³⁰ Barbara Jane Gilby on Jan Sedivka, interviewed by Judy Tierney, December 1995 on the ABC's *7.30 Report*.

³¹ Louise Oxley, "Interview: Jan Sedivka," *Siglo* 6 (May 1996): 48-54.

players to leave Australia and attracting students from Europe, America and South-east Asia.”³² The article continued through a series of questions that probed Sedivka for personal reflections upon his early history in Europe and his time in Australia. These included, for example, “You’ve been a migrant, or an outsider at least, in three countries. Did you suffer as a result of this, do you think?”³³ Sedivka responded to this question by stating that he did suffer, but that it was also very exciting. The conversation briefly covered Sedivka’s bond with the music of Czech composers and also upon his reflections on the development of Australian music. Oxley concluded with a reproduction of poems by Gwen Harwood, which were dedicated to Sedivka on the occasion of his seventieth birthday in 1987.

For Sedivka’s eightieth birthday, Leon Stemler, an accompanist at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, wrote an article in which he documented the 1982 retirement of Sedivka from the post of Director of the Conservatorium and how that meant “a change of clothes,”³⁴ as his teaching continued. Stemler observed that “the mercurial mind still ignites in response to any musical challenge.”³⁵ As an accompanist, Stemler had been in a position to observe the Sedivka approach in rehearsals, classes and lessons for decades. “The 70s and 80s were golden times for the String Department of the Conservatorium. Young players seemed to be migrating to Tasmania in droves.”³⁶ Stemler accounted for Sedivka as an academic, a musician and as teacher, recording many examples of Sedivka’s pedagogical methods. Stemler also noted that Sedivka “is a person for whom boredom holds no charms, and if a different musical vista suggests itself, he will want to try it. Even old ‘war horses,’ such as the Brahms and Beethoven sonatas, become ‘new’ every time at his prompting.”³⁷

John Stinson, a musicologist, wrote an article for the same journal issue. In the 1960s Stinson had applied to the Queensland Conservatorium of Music to study

³² Ibid., 48.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Leon Stemler, “80th Birthday Celebration – Jan Sedivka,” *Stringendo* 19, no. 2 (1998): 36.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

with one of its own members of staff, Sedivka, but this request was apparently forbidden by the Faculty. This fact intrigued Stinson to the point that he initiated a meeting with the teacher. This meeting was the beginning of a relationship that included many philosophical and academic debates. Stinson wrote “what was discussed is not my present concern, but rather the legacy of those discussions: a continuing quest for a better understanding of the meaning of experience.”³⁸ Stinson believed that Sedivka gave him the inspiration to ask the fundamental questions to allow himself to continue to learn.

Released in 1999 was the documentary, *Man of Strings: A Portrait of Jan Sedivka*, directed by Gary Kildea.³⁹ This documentary included footage of Sedivka teaching individual students, performing with wife Beryl, and rehearsing with cellist Christian Wojtowicz. In addition, musicians who have had significant professional and personal relationships with Sedivka appeared in the documentary. Former student and now colleague Christian Wojtowicz, Beryl Sedivka and composer Larry Sitsky comment upon their relationships with the ‘old master of the violin.’ It appears that Kildea’s intention is to give the viewer an insight into the daily life and teaching philosophy of a man who has become an Australian musical icon, rather than a detailed analysis of Sedivka’s pedagogy and influence.

Most recently, in another medium, Martin Hibble reviewed the film documented above.⁴⁰ Hibble gave a brief biographical sketch of Sedivka and commented how a feature of Sedivka was his refusal to smile for a camera. He pointed out how this set the tone for “a very serious musician who has influenced new generations of string players.”⁴¹ He also commented that one of Sedivka’s most “illustrious” students, Christian Wojtowicz, stated of Sedivka that “most of his students

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ John Stinson, “Sedivka in the 60s – A Reflection,” *Stringendo* 19, no. 2 (1998): 37.

³⁹ *Man of Strings: A Portrait of Jan Sedivka*, dir. Gary Kildea, 56min., Film Australia and Ronin Films, 1999, video cassette.

⁴⁰ Martin Hibble, “*Japan, Puccini and Tunisia*,” review of video *Man of Strings: A Portrait of Jan Sedivka*, dir. by Garry Kildea. *24 Hours* (September 1999): 24.

⁴¹ Ibid.

become teachers as well as players.”⁴² While Hibble broadly expressed a favourable impression of Sedivka’s influence, he articulated that in his opinion some of Sedivka’s students played with “bad intonation.”⁴³

The sources outlined in this chapter do not comprehensively examine Sedivka’s pedagogical style, philosophy, content or process. In addition, they do not attempt to investigate his influence on the Australian string scene. The methodology in this exegesis attempts to address this void.

1.4 Research methodology

The methodology adopted for this research involved four broad stages: observation and investigation, questionnaires, interviews and finally assimilation. As part of the doctoral program undertaken, the author observed four years of private violin lessons and classes conducted by Sedivka, amounting to an estimation of five hundred hours of observation. The author was also a student of Sedivka for the same four years. Through this, an awareness and understanding of the pedagogical belief system of Sedivka emerged, and the principle tenets are documented in this exegesis. The author also surveyed all literature pertaining to Sedivka. The processes described above led to the formation of a list of propositions to be investigated. These are documented at the completion of Chapter One.

Chapter Two includes documentation of significant developments in the Australian context of string performing and teaching prior to the arrival of Sedivka. Also included in Chapter Two is a brief biographical account of the life of Sedivka. The overview in Chapter Two includes Sedivka’s complementary roles as a student, teacher and performer.

The documentation of Sedivka’s pedagogy will be prefaced in Chapter Three by a discussion of authoritative international texts on the art of violin playing (see

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

Appendix One). Three texts were given greater emphasis in the chapter, and were chosen as representative examples of the body of knowledge. For the purposes of this exegesis, only the texts pertaining to the art of 'modern' violin pedagogy are examined. From the review of these volumes, a comprehensive list of 'key areas of modern violin pedagogy' was derived, providing an important benchmark for comparisons of violin pedagogy (see Appendix Two).

A significant dimension of the exegesis lies in Chapter Four, where, with the benefit of the literature review of the great masters, the opinions of Sedivka's students were sought in order to explore his pedagogical aesthetic, as explicitly stated and as implicitly experienced. Initially it was important to compile a comprehensive list of the students that Sedivka taught in Australia (see Appendix Three).⁴⁴ Approval was obtained for this phase of the project from the Ethics Committee of the University of Tasmania. The data from the students and colleagues was gathered through the preliminary questionnaire, followed by a round of structured oral interviews. Questionnaires are generally seen as a useful social research tool for a highly select group of respondents, who have a strong interest in the subject matter and who are generally well-educated and have a high socioeconomic status.⁴⁵ Thus, it was considered an appropriate tool to ascertain some of the opinions of former students. A pilot version of the questionnaire was formulated and distributed to two students who had experienced Sedivka's teaching (the preliminary questionnaire is given in Appendix Four). A number of minor changes were made before the final version of the questionnaire was sent to the potential respondents. Upon return of the questionnaires, that included a provision for the confidentiality of responses, a series of interviews were conducted. The oral interview is widely regarded as an instrument that provides the opportunity for the researcher to probe the respondents' opinions.⁴⁶ Again, pilot interviews were conducted to ensure that the procedures and format were

⁴⁴ This list does not claim to be exhaustive.

⁴⁵ William J. Goode and Paul K. Hatt, *Methods in Social Research* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1952), 182.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

adequate. To facilitate accuracy, the interviews were recorded, with the permission of the respondents.

The questionnaire and interviews were used as tools to probe past students' and individuals' memories in relation to aspects of Sedivka's teaching: Sedivka's teaching in contrast to other teachers; Sedivka's pedagogical style; Sedivka's influence on the individual and the legacy of Sedivka. Finally, Sedivka, his colleagues and former students were shown a list of key areas of violin performance, derived from the review of common pedagogical thought, and asked to comment on specific areas of the pedagogical approach of Sedivka (see Appendices Five to Seven for interview questions).

In the final chapter of this exegesis, an assessment is made as to whether the evidence can support certain propositions about Sedivka's pedagogical style and performance. The propositions that are investigated include the following:

1. That Jan Sedivka has made a significant contribution to Australian string pedagogy and performance, particularly with regard to:
 - his legacy of students who have become leading educators
 - the development of left-hand technique
 - bureaucratic infrastructures for string playing in Australia
2. That many students of Sedivka have unique performing styles and this individuality has been encouraged in his teaching
3. That Jan Sedivka is a master of language and has the ability to present information in many ways, and that his use of language and its context have a remarkable impact on his teaching

4. That Jan Sedivka's teaching has evolved from the analytical to the intuitive
5. That Jan Sedivka has established a School of Australian String Performance

Whilst investigating the various propositions listed above, some of the criticisms that have been levelled at Sedivka's pedagogy will also be documented. It is also important to note that this exegesis is not an attempt to comprehensively examine the full gamut of areas of Sedivka's influence.

To conclude, it is important to acknowledge several factors involved in this type of research. Tasmania consists of a small and tightly knit community, and in the musical sphere of Hobart, this feature is even more prevalent. Therefore, it could be difficult for an outsider to undertake significant research of the kind exhibited in this exegesis. Trust and personal knowledge can be important for the passing on of information in this type of social research.⁴⁷ It must be conceded that although professional and personal distance have been strongly maintained, the author has also been a member of the musical community of Hobart, leading to the conclusion that the essential 'inner knowledge' will have also influenced, in some way, the understanding of the subject matter.

⁴⁷ Dexter C. Dunphy, *Investigators: Social Scientists at Work* (Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire, 1971), 65.

CHAPTER TWO: THE AUSTRALIAN STRING SETTING AND THE COMING OF SEDIVKA

2.1 Introduction

To understand the musical environment into which Jan Sedivka and his wife Beryl migrated, it is necessary to reflect briefly upon the evolution of professional music making in Australia, prior to their arrival. Since its early colonial days the Australian string performance scene has expanded and grown, and periodically ignited with interest. In each of Australia's states (or colonies), the beginnings of the string 'industry' were initiated by the early immigrants. From these beginnings came a proliferation of amateur music societies who gave private and public concerts of chamber, choral and orchestral music. Within this context were private music teachers, including violin teachers and performers, who existed in many of Australia's community centres.

Musical life in Australia continued in this fashion, until the time between the two world wars and, subsequently, Australian audiences began to mature culturally and to expect a certain level of performance and activity. It is interesting to note that Australia and indeed, Hobart, produced some fine violinists for the international performing stage during this early period: specifically, Stella Honey (b. Hobart 1895-1964), Alma Moodie (b. Brisbane 1900-1943) and Joyce Brown (b. Hobart 1884-1973). Carl Flesch stated that Alma Moodie was "the most outstanding female violinist of her time."¹

2.2 Significant developments in the Australian string scene

In 1887, before Federation, the universities of Melbourne and Adelaide initiated a program of public music examinations. In 1918 this was expanded and an agreement was made between education authorities in each state to form a "national body with the purpose of providing graded assessments of the

achievements of music students.”² This national body was entitled the Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB). The role of the organisation was, and still is, to “set examination standards of a high order” and to “offer all students access to some of the best repertoire for study purposes.”³ The AMEB is one of Australia’s oldest music institutions and it has contributed to the “developing standards of performance and scholarship” throughout Australia.⁴ In this way, the establishment of the AMEB was important in raising the standard of string playing in Australia and was also important for the promotion of ‘traditional’ string repertoire.

Roger Covell stated that “a profusion of choral societies and a marked sense of enterprise in some of them were characteristic of Australian music-making in the first third of the 20th century.”⁵ This was to change in 1932, a highly significant year in Australian music history, with the establishment of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC, Australian Broadcasting Corporation since 1983). The formation of the ABC “would become in time the most important single factor in professional music-making in Australia.”⁶ The cultural growth of the Australian public was significantly contributed to by the ABC radio broadcasting of fine professional recordings.⁷ Although modelled on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Australians were cautioned not to expect too much, too soon, of the new authority. They were asked by the first Chairman of the Commission, Charles Jones, not to compare the ABC programs with that of the BBC since “London is the Mecca of all artists of outstanding ability, whereas in Australia, although we have many fine artists, the field is limited.”⁸

¹ Carl Flesch, *The Memoirs of Carl Flesch* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1979), 317.

² Janice B. Stockigt, “Australian Music Examinations Board,” in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, 1997 ed.

³ Australian Music Examinations Board, *2001 Manual of Syllabuses, Music Syllabuses* (Melbourne: McPhersons 2000), Foreword.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Roger Covell, “Australia,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2001 ed.

⁶ Roger Covell, *Australia’s Music* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1967), 112.

⁷ Ibid., 113.

⁸ K.S. Inglis, *This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission 1932-1983* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1983), 6.

Central to the mandate of the ABC was:

To give encouragement to the development of local talent and endeavour to obviate restriction of the utilisation of the services of persons who, in the opinion of the Commission, are competent to make useful contributions to broadcasting programs.⁹

Another important development was the ABC's decision in 1936 to place a permanent symphony orchestra in the capital city of each Australian state. This was to have a monumental impact on Australian culture. In many cases the already existing amateur orchestras mentioned above became the foundation of each state's ABC studio orchestra.

In addition to the formation of the symphony orchestras, the ABC initially acted as a concert agency organising "studio performances and subscription concerts, with overseas celebrity artists and conductors as a drawcard."¹⁰ In 1937, the Budapest Quartet (who were active from 1917-1967), Bronislaw Huberman (1882-1942) and Arthur Rubinstein (1887-1982) were invited to Australia as performers for the ABC. The influx of international performing artists, through the ABC and private organisations, was important for the continuing cultural development of Australian audiences.

Apart from the ABC initiatives, another important development was the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's initiative to form a concerto competition in 1940. In 1944 this was named the ABC Instrumental and Vocal Competition,¹¹ and was renamed the Young Performers' Award in 1989. Annual events such as these gave local players and teachers a national focus for pedagogical activity.

The period after the Second World War was a particular time of growth for the Australian performing community. During this time the ABC firmly established

⁹ Covell, 112.

¹⁰ Anne-Marie Forbes, "Australian Broadcasting Corporation," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, 1997 ed.

itself as a major influence in classical music in Australia. In summary, its roles were to

- Broadcast classical and some popular music
- Set up subscription concerts
- Administer the state symphony orchestras
- Administer the concerto and vocal competition¹²

Another important institution born of the era immediately after World War II (1945) was Musica Viva, founded at the instigation of Richard Goldner (1918-1994).¹³ Musica Viva was described in the *Oxford Companion to Australian Music* as a “chamber music entrepreneur, founded in Sydney in 1945, which promotes fine ensemble music throughout Australia and beyond.”¹⁴

The primary function of Musica Viva is to bring high quality, international standard chamber music to Australia. Musica Viva holds subscription concerts around Australia and focuses primarily on “the traditional European chamber repertoire.”¹⁵ In addition, Musica Viva supports innovative performers, early music ensembles, and over the years “commissioned nearly 60 compositions by Australia’s finest composers.”¹⁶

Patricia Shaw, in the *Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, stated that “the gradual decline in domestic music-making in the first half of the twentieth century was paralleled by an increase in the quantity and quality of professional activity, which helped the growth of interest in chamber music.”¹⁷ In addition, European immigration in the postwar years brought an audience for first-class chamber music. The founding of Musica Viva was also stated to have signalled “a new direction towards even greater professionalism, in which chamber repertoire

¹¹ “Young Performers Award, ABC,” in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, 1997 ed.

¹² Covell, 108-132.

¹³ Richard Goldner was a Romanian violist and teacher who played in the Vienna State Opera Orchestra. In 1939 he immigrated to Australia because of the worsening persecution of Jews in Vienna.

¹⁴ “Musica Viva,” in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, 1997 ed.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ “Chamber Music,” in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, 1997 ed.

(played) an even greater part than ever before.”¹⁸ Indeed it was widely recognised that the establishment of Musica Viva “demonstrated the strong influence of central European immigrants, to whom chamber music was an important part of musical life and who considered Australian musical culture to be sorely lacking in this regard.”¹⁹ Musica Viva pioneered subscription chamber music concerts and began importing ensembles from 1955, developing into a remarkable national concert network for fine chamber music. For the time, it was the largest of its kind in the world.

Alongside the development of the AMEB the ABC, and Musica Viva, tertiary music education advanced significantly in the middle of the twentieth century. Melbourne and Adelaide were the first Australian cities to establish tertiary music departments prior to the end of the nineteenth century. Sydney and Brisbane followed in the first half of the twentieth century. In the 1950s Newcastle and Perth established courses and another department was formed in Brisbane. In 1965 the Canberra School of Music first opened its doors to students. In the same year, the Tasmanian School of Music was established, an event highly significant to this study. The school was renamed the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music in 1966. Now, at the outset of the twenty-first century, there are twenty-four universities offering music education, in all Australian states and territories.²⁰

The national support of Australian composers and performers was signified with the establishment of the Australia Council for the Arts in 1968 (named the Australia Council in 1975). This organisation provides funding to Australian musicians and musical projects. Grants for music “operated first through a Music Board comprised of eminent musicians, then a Performing Arts board and, (from 1996) a Music fund.”²¹ The Australia Council has “strongly stimulated composition, ensemble development and performance in Australia.”²²

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ “Music Education,” in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, 1997 ed.

²¹ “Australia Council,” in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, 1997 ed.

²² Ibid.

Another significant player in the development of Australian string performance and pedagogy, was the Australian Strings Association (AUSTA). This organisation, founded in 1976 by string educator Elizabeth Morgan²³ as the Australian String Teachers' Association, is representative of private string teachers and performers. The group has chapters in each state and has a national framework with a federal president. The organisation aims to promote excellence in string performance, pedagogy, conducting and instrument making. The activities include workshops, master-classes and seminars, and the group publishes a quarterly journal entitled *Stringendo*.²⁴

There were many musical developments in Australia during the twentieth century, what with the advent of the ABC and the subsequent establishments of professional orchestras and Musica Viva. In addition, the development of the AMEB, AUSTA and the growth of tertiary music institutions need to be recognised.²⁵ The combination of the events outlined above heralded considerable cultural growth of the Australian community as a whole. However, despite the general cultural and organisational developments for music and string playing in particular, in Australia there was a considerable need for a teacher and performer of world-class standard who was prepared to invest in the Australian musical scene. Borer stated that in Australia "there have been over many years individual performers and teachers of local prominence, but for the most part, they have not been able to work on a national scale."²⁶ Sedivka, who could broadly be said to combine the elements of both European and British influences in violin performance and teaching, may have been the exception.

²³ Elizabeth Morgan was a student of Jan Sedivka in England and in Sedivka's early days in Brisbane, Australia.

²⁴ "Australian String Teachers' Association," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, 1997 ed.

²⁵ See Appendix Eight.

²⁶ Borer, 2.

2.3 Jan Sedivka's early years

Jan Sedivka's critically formative student days in Prague span the same period during which the Australian classical music scene was developing. Later, Sedivka was to play his part in the unfolding of this scene, as both a teacher and a performer. Sedivka's early attraction to the violin began when, as a small child, he heard a visiting student perform on the violin. This encounter ignited a passion and provided Sedivka with the motivation to explore the violin.

Sedivka's parents, Dr Jan and Marie Sedivka, were not musicians. However, after the visit of the student violinist and the young Sedivka's excitement over the sound, he implored them to buy a violin: "I think I was about six years old when my parents finally gave in and I got a violin."²⁷ After some time at the municipal school, Sedivka was accepted for study with Zigmund Polášek, a pupil of Otakar Ševčík. After less than two years tuition with this teacher, it was suggested that Sedivka should meet the influential teacher Otakar Ševčík (1852-1934, then 82), who accepted Sedivka as a student.²⁸

Ševčík was a Czech violinist and teacher who established a method that is reputed to have had an enormous impact on string pedagogy. It was based on the "principle of separating the mechanical from the artistic aspect of performance."²⁹ His system has been outlined as highly systematised and dogmatic. Ševčík appears to have been

Primarily interested in the technical problems, and developed special exercises to strengthen finger and arm muscles and to achieve coordination of motions. The exercises were designed exclusively for efficiency; they were not meant to be musical; in fact, they were antimusical. Everything was calculated to increase the

²⁷ David Hurst, "The Boss," *Press Press*, Autumn (1987): 20.

²⁸ Borer, 133.

²⁹ Boris Schwarz, *Great Masters of the Violin* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 395.

effectiveness of practicing, to rationalise the process of acquiring technical proficiency.³⁰

It has been claimed that Ševčík taught some five thousand students during his career in Europe and the United States of America. The most notable students included; Jan Kubelík (1880-1940), Marjorie Hayward (1885-1953), Efrem Zimbalist (1889-1985), Erica Moroni (1904-1995) and Wolfgang Schneiderhan (b. 1915).³¹ Henry Roth, an eminent musicologist of string performers warned of Ševčík's method that

If a pupil possessed an inherent penchant for musical expressiveness, overmuch exposure to the Ševčík methods (which were beneficial when used in moderation) could, and in many instances did, transform him (the pupil) into a player of juiceless mechanical rote.³²

Sedivka studied with Ševčík from 1928-1931 and following this, graduated in 1936 from the Prague Conservatory with the highest honours from the Master School of Professor Jaroslav Kocián (1883-1950). Kocián "was considered the most accomplished and characteristic exponent of the Ševčík school."³³ Kocián also taught the violin virtuoso Joseph Suk (b. 1929) at the Prague Conservatory.

In 1938, Sedivka received a French Government scholarship to study for one year in the Classé Jacques Thibaud (1880-1953) at the École Normale de Music in Paris. Thibaud was a French violinist who studied with Martin Marsick (1848-1924), one of the great teachers of the nineteenth century, who had himself studied with Joseph Joachim (1831-1907). Thibaud was a chief exponent of the French school, and was in fact labelled as the "premier French Violinist of his time."³⁴ Thibaud's playing was "distinguished by the silvery tone and the exquisite polish

³⁰ Ibid., 395-396.

³¹ Gracian Černušák and Boris Schwarz, "Ševčík, Otakar," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 1980 ed.

³² Henry Roth, *Violin Virtuosos From Paganini to the 21st Century* (Los Angeles: Classic Books, 1997), 61.

³³ Schwarz, 399.

³⁴ Ibid., 356.

of his technique, which combined with instinctive warmth of expression in performances that were refined rather than robust.”³⁵

The French style of violin playing, as executed by Thibaud, was said to have originated with Giovanni Battista Viotti (1755-1824). Chappell White stated of Viotti that “he is considered the founder of the ‘modern’ (19th-century) French school of violin playing.”³⁶ The French style was described by Schwarz as “refined and elegant,”³⁷ and David Boyden contrasted the school with the German style stating: “The Germans were generally more conservative in technique and more serious in musical attitude than the French, whose virtues included great technical facility, elegance and imagination.”³⁸ E. N. Doring commented on “the typically French leaning towards superficial brilliancy and showy emotionalism.”³⁹

Thibaud formed a notable piano trio with Alfred Cortot (1877- 1962) and Pablo Casals (1876-1973) that was predominantly active from 1930 to 1935. Thibaud’s fellow students under Marsick included Carl Flesch (1873-1944), Bronislaw Huberman and George Enesco (1881-1955). Carl Flesch was to become a monumental figure in modern violin pedagogy whose philosophies on teaching are discussed in Chapter Three.

Sedivka’s final pedagogical influence of a formal nature occurred during a special course in violin studies and pedagogy, undertaken between 1942 and 1945 in England, with Max Rostal (1905-1991). Max Rostal was a British violinist of Austrian birth, who studied with Arnold Rose (1863-1946) in Vienna, and Carl Flesch in Berlin. In the 1920s Max Rostal was considered to be “[Carl] Flesch’s

³⁵ W. W. Cobbett and Noël Goodwin, “Thibaud, Jacques,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2001 ed.

³⁶ Chappell White, “Viotti, Giovanni Battista,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2001 ed.

³⁷ Schwarz, 355.

³⁸ David Boyden, “Violin,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 1980 ed.

³⁹ E. N. Doring, “Violin,” in *The International Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians*, 11th ed.

most brilliant student.”⁴⁰ Rostal also taught Yfrah Neaman (b. 1923), Igor Ozim (b. 1931), Edith Peinemann (b. 1937), Nell Gotkovsky (b. 1939) and members of the Amadeus Quartet (founded in 1947). Along with his acclaim as a soloist and teacher, Rostal established the European String Teachers’ Association in 1974. This institution was to provide teachers with an avenue for the “exchange of information on the technique and teaching of string playing.”⁴¹ The impact on string performance and pedagogy of Rostal has been well documented and he is considered “in his manner of thinking and teaching – most like his late master [Flesch].”⁴²

In contrast to his musical studies, Sedivka briefly studied law at the prestigious Charles University in Prague, however he “did not care for Law.”⁴³ In the words of Sedivka, he enrolled in law because

It was thought that boys from good families should have some sort of definite line that was ascertainable and in those days a lot of them went into law and subsequently a few years later they all did medicine.⁴⁴

In summary, as a student Sedivka was subject to wide-ranging influences from the highly ordered and technically-based Ševčík school, to the French school in Jacques Thibaud and finally, in England, by Max Rostal, of the Flesch and Ševčík schools. These pedagogical influences will be revisited in Chapter Four in the process of establishing Sedivka’s own pedagogical persona.

2.4 Jan Sedivka as a performer

As a performer, Jan Sedivka has had a distinguished career, both as a soloist and as a chamber musician. He was a member of the London Czech Trio (with Karel Horitz, cello and Lisa Marketta, piano) from 1941-1943, and was a founding

⁴⁰ Schwarz, 341.

⁴¹ Noël Goodwin, “Rostal, Max,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2001 ed.

⁴² Schwarz, 342.

⁴³ Hirst, 20.

member of the London International Trio (with Sela Trau, cello and Tom Bromley, piano) who performed from 1950 to 1960. In 1966 Sedivka formed the Tasmanian Conservatorium Trio (with Sela Trau, cello and Beryl Sedivka, piano). This ensemble performed regularly in Tasmania until 1978. Sedivka also formed a chamber orchestra called the Jan Sedivka Chamber Orchestra and gave many solo and concerto performances with orchestras such as the British Broadcasting Corporation Symphony and the London Symphony. In addition, Sedivka gave performances throughout Europe and later with many of the Australian symphony orchestras.

The many works composed for and or dedicated to Sedivka bear testimony to his influence as a performer in Australia. In particular, the four violin concertos by Larry Sitsky (b. 1934) and concertos by Colin Brumby (b. 1933), Edward Cowie (b. 1943), Ian Cugley (b. 1945), Eric Gross (b. 1926), Don Kay (b. 1933), Bozidar Kos (b. 1934) and James Penberthy (b. 1917), are the most notable.

2.5 Jan Sedivka as a teacher

According to Peter Scott, “it is as a string teacher that Sedivka’s distinctive qualities have found major fulfilment.”⁴⁴ As a violin teacher, Sedivka has held teaching appointments in five institutions around the world. In England he taught at the Trinity College of Music (1951-1961) where he was the Violin Professor. Also during this time he was the Director of Chamber Music at Goldsmith’s College, the University of London and was the Head of the Instrumental department at the Surrey College of Music. In 1961 Sedivka, his wife Beryl, cellist Sela Trau and eight of Sedivka’s violin students immigrated to Australia where Sedivka took up the principal Violin Lecturer position at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music (1961-1965). As mentioned previously in Chapter One, to follow a particular teacher in Europe was a long established tradition, however in Australia in the early 1960s it was thought to be very peculiar that eight students

⁴⁴ Jan Sedivka, interviewed by author, 13 June 2001, tape recording.

⁴⁵ David Mercer, ed., *Festschrift Jan Sedivka* (Hobart: University of Tasmania, 1982), Preface.

would accompany the Sedivkas from the United Kingdom to Brisbane. Sedivka recalled that the “youngsters would come and spend a weekend with us or talk until late in the night. I was a constant point of reference; they would treat me as a father or a friend. They used to call it all sorts of names – a religious group, a cult...”⁴⁶

Despite breaking tradition with his unusual entry into the Australian scene, Sedivka had a significant influence in Queensland. Sedivka was one of the chief instigators of an instrumental teaching scheme in schools that is still operating in Queensland. The Queensland state school system employs music specialist teachers in both primary and secondary schools and opportunities exist for students to study orchestral and band instruments through the education department.⁴⁷

Given Sedivka’s impact in Queensland, Jan and Beryl Sedivka were invited by Rex Hobcroft, then Director of Music, to join the staff of the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music in 1966: Jan as a Lecturer in Violin, and Beryl as a Lecturer in Piano. Thirty-five years later the Sedivkas still teach at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music.

In addition to the numerous teaching appointments, Sedivka has given master classes throughout Australia and in China and has “made the Australian string school internationally recognised by attracting talented players from over twenty countries of the five continents.”⁴⁸ He has been a visiting scholar at the University of Adelaide, the University of Melbourne, the University of Western Australia, the Adelaide College of the Arts, the Canberra School of Music, the University of Queensland, the James Cook University and the Government Department for Further Education in South Australia. Some of Sedivka’s short-term postings

⁴⁶ Shirley Apthorp, “Maestro’s popularity upset Queensland,” *The Bulletin* (18 June 1993): 111.

⁴⁷ Anne-Marie Forbes, “Brisbane,” in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, 1997 ed.

⁴⁸ Larry Sitsky, *Violin Concertos 1 & 3, Jan Sedivka, An 80th birthday celebration*, Tall Poppies TP124, 1998, compact disc.

outside of Australia were at the Peking Central Conservatory and the Shanghai Conservatory.

2.6 The Tasmanian String Summer School

In 1971, on the initiative of Sedivka and Rex Hobcroft, a residential string summer school was founded in Tasmania. The school was formed as a result of the regular stream of students who travelled to Tasmania, in the academic and school holidays, to study with Sedivka.⁴⁹ As stated by Edmiston and Stemler “the schools were designed to attract professional string players, teachers, advanced students and amateur players.”⁵⁰ In its first year the Summer String School had thirty-three students from four Australian states and quickly grew in size and reputation. Only four years later, in 1975, the school enrolled over one hundred string students, “possibly the upper limit for the School in its present form.”⁵¹ In the eighteen-year history of the school, Sedivka had contact with many hundreds of string students from all over Australia and abroad. Through this medium, Sedivka had a significant influence on Australian string life.

The daily format of the schools included lecture demonstrations on violin technique from Sedivka, performance workshops, chamber music and orchestral rehearsals. Over the years, staff at the school included notable string pedagogues and performers such as Keith Crellin, Lyndal Edmiston, Elizabeth Morgan, Robert Pickler, Sela Trau, Christian Wojtowicz, and other members of two resident string quartets at the Tasmanian Conservatorium, the Rialannah and the Petra quartets.

In 1975, Leon Stemler described the content of the School, and as quoted in Chapter One, section 1.3, stated that a number of the seminars addressed strategies

⁴⁹ Respondent 12, interviewed by author, 11 June 2001, tape recording.

⁵⁰ Edmiston and Stemler, *Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, Beginning the journey, the first 25 years* (Hobart: University of Tasmania, 1990), 39.

⁵¹ Leon Stemler, “The Tasmanian String Summer School,” *The Australian Journal for Music Education* 17, (October 1975): 19.

for the management of problems in teaching situations.⁵² Stemler put forth the proposition that

This is particularly appropriate, for it is perhaps in fostering a less doctrinaire approach and a more questioning attitude among our future teachers that the School may eventually be shown to have its greatest impact on the musical life of Australia.⁵³

2.7 Jan Sedivka's other musical endeavours

Alongside his integral role at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music and as a primary initiator of the Tasmanian String Summer School, Sedivka has been an important contributor to other Australian music organisations. He was involved with the Australian Music Examinations Board from his arrival in Australia in 1961, as documented earlier in Chapter Two. In Queensland, Sedivka was an examiner of strings and was a member of the Queensland Advisory Board for the AMEB. In 1966, when Sedivka moved to Tasmania, he was appointed to the Tasmanian Advisory Board and became the first 'resident' strings examiner. Before Sedivka's arrival, examiners had been brought to Hobart from Melbourne. Sedivka was the Chair of the Tasmanian Board of the AMEB from 1971 until 1982. He also acted as the Federal Chair of the organisation in 1975 and was then elected to that role for the periods 1976-1977 and 1980-81. In the mid-1980s, Sedivka became the first reviewer of the violin and viola syllabuses.⁵⁴

In addition to his role with the AMEB, Sedivka served on the Australia Council Music Board through this time, 1975-1989. As documented earlier in Chapter Two, the Music Board of the Australia Council "comprised of eminent musicians" and at this time Sedivka was considered to be one of Australia's most esteemed musicians.⁵⁵

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ "Dr Jan Sedivka," Citation, *Honorary Fellowship in Music, Australia*, 1994.

⁵⁵ "Australia Council," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, 1997 ed.

2.8 Conclusion

Sedivka's journey has been vast, both in terms of time and distance. While he was learning his craft in Europe, which for many Australians was the centre of classical music, a realisation had developed in Australia that steps had to be taken to develop musical talent in-house. The establishment of the ABC, in 1932, proved to be one of the most significant avenues to enhance classical music in Australia. Other establishments such as Musica Viva, the AMEB and the tertiary music institutions also became integral parts of the musical scene. Sedivka played his part in many of these bodies, though most significantly at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, (within the University of Tasmania for a significant part of Sedivka's influence). The tertiary setting was appropriate for Sedivka, as he has always been a man of vision, learning and culture, appraised of the literature of his profession. It is this literature that is the focus of Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE: KEY AREAS OF MODERN VIOLIN PEDAGOGY

3.1 Introduction

The documentation of the art of playing the violin has fascinated performers and teachers, professionals and amateurs for many centuries. Lord Yehudi Menuhin commented on the difficulty and magnitude of this fascination:

The violin, delicate and small as it is, holds too much of the history of man, his creative gifts, his craftsmanship, his emotion and thought, to be encompassed by any one writer.¹

Method books, treatises and tutor books for the violin began to emerge from Italy, France and Germany in the mid-eighteenth century.² For the purposes of this exegesis, three key method books pertaining to the art of contemporary (1900-2001) and advanced violin playing will be examined. The discussion will focus on pedagogical philosophy and pedagogical content, followed briefly by a reflection upon the teachings of the great masters.

Violin teaching was described by Carl Flesch in *The Art of Violin Playing*, as “the transmission of acquired knowledge to others.”³ Flesch also stated that the “aim of violin instruction is the training of new generations of violinists who may profit by the experiences of the generations present or past.”⁴ In this examination of pedagogy, what constitutes this stated ‘acquired knowledge,’ and also the mode for the transmission of this knowledge, should be considered.

The art and science of teaching, specifically violin teaching, is constantly evolving and methods employed at the outset of the twentieth century appear not to be as

¹ Yehudi Menuhin and William Primrose, *Yehudi Menuhin Music Guides Violin and Viola*, (London: Macdonald and Jane’s, 1976), 1.

² Robin Stowell, *Violin technique and performance practice in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 5.

³ Carl Flesch, *The Art of Violin Playing*, vol. 2 (New York: Carl Fischer, 1930), 125.

⁴ Ibid.

widely used in modern times. It is also difficult, as intimated by Menuhin above, to document in writing, an art that can not be easily codified into a system of objective principles. As Kato Havas stated “no one can learn even to ride a bicycle from a set of written instructions, and this book does not of course presume to teach a student to play the violin.”⁵ Ivan Galamian corroborated this with the statement that “nobody can study, nobody can teach from a book alone. What a book can do is help.”⁶ In this way, the documentation of violin playing and teaching often reflects the writer’s personal formulae for success in performance and pedagogy.

In an attempt to gain an understanding of the beliefs of the great masters of the violin, and with the acknowledgment of the limitations documented above, twenty-two published pedagogical texts were consulted (see Appendix One). As stated in Chapter One, a comprehensive list of ‘key areas of modern violin pedagogy’ was derived from this examination of pedagogical texts, providing valuable benchmarks for comparisons of violin pedagogy. As recorded earlier, Chapter Three continues with the documentation and comparison of ‘key areas’ from three of the twentieth century’s most celebrated volumes on violin pedagogy. The authors and their titles are namely: Leopold Auer (1845-1930), *Violin Playing as I Teach It*,⁷ Carl Flesch (1873-1944) *The Art of Violin Playing*,⁸ and Ivan Galamian (1903-1981) *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* (for detailed biographical details on these teachers see Appendices Nine to Eleven).

Robin Stowell stated, that Flesch’s text *The Art of Violin Playing* was “a synthesis of the techniques and artistic priorities of the principal schools of violin teaching in the 19th and early 20th centuries.”⁹ He also identified eight pedagogues who were considered “among the most distinguished teachers to appear in the course of the

⁵ Kato Havas, *A New Approach to Violin Playing* (London: Bosworth, 1961), 3.

⁶ Ivan Galamian, *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* (London: Prentice-Hall, 1962), xii.

⁷ Leopold Auer, *Violin Playing as I Teach It* (New York: Dover Publications, 1921).

⁸ Flesch, *The Art of Violin Playing*, vol. 1 (New York: Carl Fischer, 1924), 125.

⁹ Robin Stowell, “Violin” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2001 ed.

20th century.”¹⁰ These teachers were Leopold Auer, Otakar Ševčík, Carl Flesch, Max Rostal, Lucien Capet, Pzotr Stolzarskz, Louis Persinger and Ivan Galamian. With the exception of Stolzarskz and Persinger, these teachers relate directly to the research presented in this exegesis.

The texts of Auer, Flesch and Galamian were chosen as the focus for this chapter, as they provide documentation of the teaching practices of three of the twentieth century’s most prominent violin teachers. While teaching and performing practices have changed considerably since the publication of Auer’s text in 1921 and Flesch’s in 1924 and 1930, these earlier texts lend important insights into the pedagogical practices current at the time of Sedivka’s training in Europe.

The texts of Auer and Flesch were known and available in Australia before the arrival of Sedikva in 1961. The work of Galamian, now central to the literature, would not, however, have been widely available in the early days of Sedivka’s time in Australia. Galamian, nevertheless, represents one of the twentieth century’s most influential teachers and the text has been included to provide an example of a pedagogical approach, current, at the time of Sedivka’s early years in Australia.

Leopold Auer’s book entitled *Violin Playing as I Teach It*, was first published in 1921. It was a presentation of personal opinions from Auer’s experiences as a violinist and a string teacher. The book commenced with a historical survey of pedagogy at the time when Auer began to play the violin. The second chapter investigated how to hold the violin, the bow and the position of the thumb. Following an examination of practice techniques, Auer analysed tone production, the use of vibrato, portamento and glissando as expressive techniques. Auer then summarised his ideas on bowing technique, describing the execution of eight standard bow strokes. Following this was a detailed examination of left-hand technique and double-stops. Special devices such as ornaments, trills, pizzicato and harmonics were examined in chapters eight and nine. An important dimension

¹⁰ Ibid.

of the work was the discussion of nuance, the soul, interpretation and phrasing. After a reference to style, Auer discusses the eternal problem of ‘nerves’ in performance and ends with a look at violin repertoire.

Flesch fastidiously recorded his views on violin playing in his text *The Art of Violin Playing* (Vol. 1, 1924 and Vol. 2, 1930). *The Art of Violin Playing* consisted of two volumes, with a total of 408 pages. The volumes are divided into three sections: the first covered technique in general – Flesch described this section as “violin playing as a craft;”¹¹ the second section was on applied technique, described as “violin playing as a science;”¹² and finally, the third section covered artistic realisation, “violin playing as an art.”¹³ Flesch stated that his text was not intended as a school of violin playing, but rather as a reference to guide the teacher in violinistic execution and also to train the mind of a “reasoning” violinist to become his/her own teacher.¹⁴ The text was a guide for a musician interested in learning through a logical progression of information.

Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching by Ivan Galamian was first published in 1962 and comprised six sections. The introduction covers problems in some of the present day educational systems and chapter one contained an investigation of technique and interpretation. The main body of the volume was contained in chapters two and three, dealing with the technical requirements for the left and right hands, and finally, Galamian discussed practising and teaching. The second edition also included a postscript by Elizabeth A. H. Green, presenting “the other side of the coin,”¹⁵ a third-person discussion of Galamian’s teaching practices.

¹¹ Flesch, vol. 1, 8.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 3.

¹⁵ Galamian, ix.

3.2 Pedagogical philosophy

In his introduction, Leopold Auer stated that everything that needed to be said on the subject of playing the violin had been said over and over again, and “all the conscientious student needs to do is to follow them in order to attain perfection!”¹⁶ The reason that Auer chose to document his ideas, in the text discussed here, was that “I have merely endeavoured to present my own personal opinions – the fruit of my own experience as a violinist and as a teacher of the violin – in the hope of interesting those to whom the subject itself voices an appeal.”¹⁷

In *The Art of Violin Playing*, Carl Flesch asked whether there were general principles to do with the art of violin playing that do not change with time.¹⁸ To this he responded by stating that “in general this must be denied. Many roads lead to Rome – our art contains no magic formula – the only difference being that some roads lead to Rome more quickly and with less expenditure of effort than others.”¹⁹ In this light, Flesch intended *The Art of Violin Playing* to guide the teacher to train his pupils according to up-to-date knowledge of violin technique. Flesch accomplished this aim by leading the student to think logically, and by cultivating the analytical investigation of the problems of violin technique to teach the student to become “his own teacher.”²⁰ With regard to the role of the teacher, Flesch commented that the “*ideal* teacher does not regard his profession as a means of existence, but first of all as a call, a reason for existence, a life work.”²¹

Ivan Galamian stated his concern for the documentation of a method in *Principles of Violin Playing*:

¹⁶ Auer, x.

¹⁷ Auer, ix.

¹⁸ Flesch, vol. 1, 8.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., vol. 1, 3.

²¹ Ibid., vol. 2, 126.

Putting a system into a book, even writing a book like this, is a problematical undertaking because no printed work can ever replace the live teacher-student relationship. The very best that a teacher can give to a student is the individualised, unique approach, which is too personal a thing to be put down on paper anyway.²²

Galamian advocated a set of adjustable general principles that a teacher could employ according to the individuality of each student. He believed that what was ‘right’ was “natural for the particular student, for only what is natural is comfortable and efficient.”²³ Galamian perceived a lack of understanding of the importance of the interdependence of the discrete elements of violin playing in many other pedagogical systems. He was concerned by the over-emphasis on the physical elements of playing the violin in such texts. Galamian believed that “the key to facility and accuracy and, ultimately, to complete mastery of violin technique was to be found in the relationship of mind to muscles, that is, in the ability to make the sequence of mental command and physical response as quick and as precise as possible.”²⁴

3.3 Pedagogical content

3.3.1 Technique and posture

Violin technique has been identified as “an important tool that violinists rely upon to express themselves musically, and to create beautiful, meaningful music.”²⁵ Galamian made the distinction between interpretative and virtuoso technique. Interpretative technique in his opinion was “the ability to direct mentally and to execute physically all of the necessary playing movements of the left and right hands, arms and fingers...the complete mastery over all of the potentialities of the instrument,”²⁶ and should be the highest aim of all violinists. Virtuoso technique,

²² Galamian, xi.

²³ Ibid., 1.

²⁴ Ibid., 2.

²⁵ Marianne Murray Perkins, *A Comparison of Violin Playing Techniques*, Kato Havas, Paul Rolland and Shinichi Suzuki (Clifton: American String Teachers Association, 1995), 2.

²⁶ Galamian, 5.

in contrast, was brilliant in execution but lacked total control. Carl Flesch stated that “a perfect technique consists in producing all tones with purity of intonation, tonal beauty, and with the shadings and the rhythm as required by the composer.”²⁷

Leopold Auer commented that there were many texts that described the process of acquiring the mastery of violin technique. He stated, however, that from the whole body of literature only “meagre results” of violin performance had been produced.²⁸ Galamian identified what was lacking from many of the published method books – concurring with Auer’s reservations, that missing from these texts were discussions on the vital area of ‘mental work;’ the “activity of the brain which must control that of the fingers.”²⁹

To describe the relationship of mental command over muscular response, Galamian used the term ‘correlation.’ In Galamian’s belief, correlation held the key to complete technical control and was, therefore, the vehicle for the highest ideal in music making, that of interpretation.³⁰ Galamian accepted that the best performances were the ones that were free and contained elements of improvisation, possible only with complete technical control.³¹ Galamian believed that the technique of the violin was formed around the three basic elements of music: beauty of tone, accuracy of intonation and control of rhythm, and that the combination of these elements, with interpretation, lead to successful performance.

With regard to posture, and the holding of the instrument, the descriptions of Auer and Flesch were the most prescriptive. Auer stated that the violin “should be held in such a position that the eyes may be fixed on the head of the instrument, and the left arm should be thrust forward under the back of the violin so that the fingers will fall perpendicularly on the strings, the fingertips striking them with decided

²⁷ Flesch, vol. 1, 8.

²⁸ Auer, x.

²⁹ Flesch, vol. 1, ix.

³⁰ Galamian, 6.

³¹ Ibid., 7.

firmness.”³² He warned against “resting the violin on the shoulder,” and discouraged the use of a shoulder rest, as it reduced the tonal possibilities of the violin.³³ Auer advised the use of the chin rest and contended that it should be adapted to suit the physicality of each individual. Auer also stated that the player should “try to raise the violin as high as possible,” to facilitate free position changes.³⁴ Auer described the positioning of both the left and the right arms, stating that the student should try to lessen the distance between the arms by inclining the body slightly to the left, without resting the left arm against the body.³⁵

Carl Flesch provided an even more detailed discussion of posture in volume one of *The Art of Violin Playing*. He advocated a “straddling leg-position,” as it offered the body a strong foundation with stability and freedom for movement.³⁶ With regard to the positioning of violin, Flesch believed that it should be held in a way that was not too far to the left or the right, so the bow could be drawn parallel to the bridge. He also documented that the violin should be positioned on the collarbone, held by the left lower jaw, and, therefore, only partially supported by the left-hand, which must retain the greatest possible freedom for position changing. Flesch thought that use of the shoulder rest was dependent upon the individual and the length of the player’s neck, stating that it was “a decided advantage not to be obliged to use a cushion.”³⁷

The height of the violin from the floor, contended Flesch, was important for tone production. He believed that if the violin was too low, the bow would slip over the fingerboard, and if the violin was too high, the bow would remain too close to the bridge. Flesch stated that “the whole secret of an impeccable tone consists in bringing bow and strings into contact in the narrowly limited space conditioned by

³² Auer, 10.

³³ Ibid., 10-11

³⁴ Ibid., 11.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Flesch, vol. 1, 14.

³⁷ Ibid., 15.

the necessity of shading, duration of stroke and tonal pitch.”³⁸ To conclude the section on posture and the position of the violin, Flesch documented his views on the position of the head. This position, he believed, should be erect during practice and free during performance. Flesch contended that if the head were too close to the instrument the player would “luxuriate in mere tonal beauty, without criticism.”³⁹ However, by maintaining the erect position through practice the player would remain critical to tonal imperfections.

In contrast to Auer and Flesch, Galamian was not prescriptive with regard to posture and did not believe that strict rules should be adhered to. He stated that “the relationship of the instrument to the body, arms and hands has to be one that will allow a comfortable and efficient execution of all playing movements”⁴⁰ and contended that what was natural should prevail and that excessive bodily movements ought to be avoided.

3.3.1.1 Left-hand/arm technique

Left-hand and arm technique are complex areas of violin performance. Compiled in Appendix Two is a list of ‘key areas of modern violin pedagogy,’ incorporating the topics discussed by the ‘great masters,’ in relation to left-hand and arm technique. The areas included below represent a summary of those discussed in the three treatises of Auer, Flesch and Galamian.

Hand position will be the first area of left-hand technique to be discussed. Auer, without naming it as such, recommended the use of the ‘Geminiani’ grip⁴¹ to avoid “an incorrect finger position in the first position.”⁴² The Geminiani grip requires the violinist to place their fourth finger on a ‘d’ on the ‘g’ string, the third finger on a ‘g’ on the ‘d’ string, the second finger on a ‘c’ on the ‘a’ string and the first

³⁸ Ibid., 16.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Galamian, 12.

⁴¹ Geminiani, *The Art of Playing on the Violin* (London, 1751. Reprint, edited with an introduction by David D. Boyden. Oxford: 1952), 1.

finger on a 'f' on the 'e' string. In this way, Auer instructs the 'setting-up' of the hand-position.

Flesch stated that the position of the left-arm, fingers and thumb were "closely interconnected and interdependent."⁴³ With regard to 'hand position,' Flesch documented little. However, in his discussion of the extension of the hand, he stated that he was "opposed to all exaggerated and systematic attempts at stretching, because the position of the fourth, natural to the hand, is in danger of becoming a position of the fifth."⁴⁴

Galamian stated that the left-hand should be set in a way that in the first position, the octave of a 'b' with the first and the fourth fingers, falls into a natural position. He contended that the positioning of the fingers determined the placement of the left thumb, hand and arm.⁴⁵ Galamian documented that the hand should not be oriented around the first finger, as this would restrict and strain the fourth finger. Galamian also advised that the left wrist should be held in a position where there is (almost) a straight alignment between the hand and the forearm. An exception to this general principle would be for people with shorter fingers and arms, who would require that the elbow be closer to the body. Finally, Galamian stated that the position of the elbow should not be firmly set, but rather should rotate under the fingerboard according to the string that the player's fingers are on.

In Galamian's opinion the positioning of the thumb was integral to the positioning of the left-hand. Auer also held this view and stated that "the thumb should not extend beyond the fingerboard,"⁴⁶ and that it should be placed toward the second and third fingers to enable a "greater liberty of action."⁴⁷ Auer commented that the thumb needed the most attention, as it often caused tension and immobilised the use of the left-hand. Galamian contended that the role of the thumb was to exert an

⁴² Auer, 12.

⁴³ Flesch, vol. 1, 17.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 24.

⁴⁵ Galamian, 14.

⁴⁶ Auer, 11.

equal and opposite pressure to that of the fingers and that it should “approximate the curvature of the neck of the instrument.”⁴⁸ The role of the thumb, in Flesch’s opinion, consisted of three primary functions, firstly to “provide a light support for the violin,” secondly to “supply a counter-pressure for the pressure of the four other fingers,” and finally to “act as an intermediary in the transfer from the middle register... to the lower ...and upper.”⁴⁹

Both Flesch and Galamian, in their respective discussions on the left-hand, divided the movements the hand is required to make into five categories. Galamian’s categories are listed below and he discussed that, in general, most players exert too much force in all of these five movements.

1. Vertical movement of the fingers
2. Horizontal movement of the finger
3. String crossings
4. Sliding motion of fingers and hand
5. Vibrato movement⁵⁰

In Galamian’s opinion the fingers need only use an easy pressure, sufficient to hold down the strings. Also, in Galamian’s opinion, the “fingers fall perpendicularly on the tips either in the ‘square’ position or in an elongated position, depending upon the note being played.”⁵¹ Flesch’s categories differ from Galamian’s in nomenclature and do not incorporate the movement required to produce a vibrato.

The vertical, falling movement or action of the left-hand fingers, is an area of fundamental importance to playing the violin. As no two players have the same physical characteristics, Auer believed that rules could not be made regarding finger pressure and therefore was not prescriptive in his description. He stated that “the pressure of the fingers must conform in exact measure to their physical

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Galamian, 18.

⁴⁹ Flesch, vol. 1, 18.

⁵⁰ Galamian, 18-19.

strength.”⁵² In addition, Auer contended that the softer the dynamic, the greater the finger pressure should be to enable the rapid vibration of the note. Auer also stated that one should increase finger pressure, as the position on the fingerboard and therefore the height of the string above it, rises.

Flesch in *The Art of Violin Playing*, stated, that each finger should fall onto the strings with its own natural strength, and commented that he regarded the “exaggerated raising of the fingers as well as ‘flinging’ them onto the strings as needless, a waste of strength, and consequently injurious.”⁵³ Flesch also stated that excessive finger pressure could cause the tone to be brittle.

‘Finger organisation’ and ‘holding the fingers down’ are key areas of left-hand technique. Some teachers, as documented by Flesch, advocate that the fingers remain on the strings as often as possible. Flesch believed that if this resulted in the avoidance of unnecessary movements of the left-hand fingers, the fingers should be left down. However, unnecessarily leaving the fingers down, in Flesch’s opinion, could hinder the vibrato.

Timing is an important ‘key area’ of violin technique. According to Auer and Galamian, with regard to the mechanics involved in playing the violin, the timing of the mechanic action, is of great significance. Galamian made the distinction between musical and technical timing: musical timing related to the tempo of the piece and referred to the actual rhythmic sounding of the notes within the desired tempo. In contrast, technical timing, referred to the movements required by the left and right hands and fingers, in order for the musical timing to be in place. The fingers of the left-hand would often have to be prepared ahead of time (technical timing) in order to accommodate the pre-requisite musical timing. Galamian contended that complete mastery of the timing phenomenon was to do with

⁵¹ Ibid., 17.

⁵² Auer, 36.

⁵³ Flesch, vol. 1, 18.

correlation “of the immediate and accurate response of the muscles to the directives of the mind.”⁵⁴

Auer did not make a distinction between technical and musical timing. However, he stressed, in the documentation of practising chromatic scales, that “the quickness of physical movement on the part of the fingers should be developed without reference to the musical tempi, which may be taken as slowly as desired.”⁵⁵

The next ‘key area’ to be addressed will be that of violin ‘fingering.’ According to Auer, the choice of what fingering to use was an individual one, dependent upon an individual’s hand structure, strength and relative ease of execution of specific fingerings. Generally speaking, however, Auer suggested the student be guided by the use of rhythmic fingering, where the student would shift on a beat, rather than between the beats.

Flesch discussed the difficulty, with regard to fingering that there are so many possibilities for a violinist to choose. He asked the question “are there firmly established fundamental principles according to which we may determine the most favourable succession of the fingers - the correct fingering?”⁵⁶ To this Flesch replied that there were no rules regarding the choice of fingerings, and that it remained up to the individual’s personal taste, and to their technical skill. In Flesch’s mind, however, and in agreement with Auer, choosing the fingering that required the “least exertion of strength” was one of the best methods for aiding the decision.⁵⁷

With regard to the fingering of scales, Flesch did not believe that violinists should practise more than one fingering pattern. He stated that

⁵⁴ Galamian, 23.

⁵⁵ Auer, 40.

⁵⁶ Flesch, vol. 1, 118.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Violin-playing in itself already is so difficult an art that the action it demands should be simplified so far as possible, and by no means (unless there are musical reasons) made more difficult. If we are accustomed to one certain fingering (which we consider the best)...it is possible for us...when reading at sight...to carry out the necessary partial movements in the form of a movement-complex with utmost smoothness. This is not the case when we are accustomed to playing scales in all sorts of possible finger-combinations.”⁵⁸

In contrast to Auer and Flesch, with regard to fingerings, Galamian placed a higher priority on musical expression than on comfort, and ease of execution. While Galamian contended that the developments in modern left-hand technique, such as: new extensions; semitone shifts; and the use of even-numbered positions; greatly improved technical facility. Some areas of the modernisation of technique, however, including the omission of slides, deprived the performer of valuable tonal colours and warmth.⁵⁹ Galamian noted that substitutions could be used to expressively change the colour of a note.

Galamian chose to contradict many teachers of his time with the proposal that one should vary fingerings occasionally. He stated that a teacher should prescribe fingerings at the outset of study, and commented that

by acquiring an independence from set patterns, a violinist's whole mental approach to playing will gain in flexibility and freedom. That a player with such facility will not be ruffled when, by accident, he takes an unplanned fingering, or bowing, is another advantage of such training.⁶⁰

Position changing was one of the fundamental areas of left-hand technique discussed by Auer, Flesch and Galamian. Auer's primary belief was that all position changes must occur inaudibly and that the thumb should not clutch the

⁵⁸ Ibid., 130.

⁵⁹ Galamian, 35.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 36.

neck of the violin, and should follow after the first finger when moving from position to position.

Flesch's discussion of position changing was the most detailed of the three teachers, and he contended that the shift formed "the most arduous portion of the whole system of left-hand technique."⁶¹ He continued by defining the shift, as "the measurement of a fixed, exactly defined distance, in which, in the lower positions (until the fourth position is reached) the lower arm alone, and thenceforward the upper arm, hand and thumb are concerned, the fingers remaining more passive."⁶² Flesch stated that the hand and arm were responsible for estimating and covering, the distance of the shift and that the role of fingers was merely to touch the strings at the destination. In Flesch's opinion, the fingers only change their position when correcting an inaccurate shift.

It was the descending changes of position that Flesch believed to be more difficult than the ascending changes, because of the greater pressure of the fingers, and therefore, the greater counter-pressure exerted by the thumb. When changing from the third position to a higher position, the thumb, contended Flesch, should be prepared in advance to allow the arm to swing upward. However, he stated that this should not happen with changes from the first to the third position.

Flesch described how to effect or practice position changes. He stated that listening was one of the most important ways of achieving an accurate shift. He also contended that the use of auxiliary (intermediary) notes were important for study purposes, however, should not be employed in performance. Flesch stated that due to the use of auxiliary notes "the change of position is in reality carried out by the self same finger."⁶³

⁶¹ Flesch, vol. 1, 26.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., 128.

Flesch made the distinction between technical position changing (glissando), and emotional position changing (portamento), and believed that the glissando should be carried out by the finger that would guarantee that the shortest distance be covered. In agreement with Auer, Flesch suggested that if possible, one should change on the strongest beat of the bar. Auer believed that portamento and glissando should be used sparingly. Portamento, in Auer's opinion should only be employed when the melody was descending.

Several types of portamento, were discussed by Flesch, and with these he summarised that the penetrative power of a portamento was in direct proportion to the distance travelled. He also stated that portamento, was more effective, the less it was employed. Flesch commented that position changing was ineffectual if the violin was not held at the moment of the change by increased strength of the shoulder, chin and collarbone.

Galamian defined position changing as the "action of the entire arm and hand, including all of the fingers and the thumb," and continued with the statement that "the flexibility of the thumb, important for all facets of the left-hand technique, was nowhere more essential than in shifting."⁶⁴ Galamian asserted that in shifting, the octave frame of the hand should remain constant, the span of the hand, however, would gradually reduce the closer it moved toward the bridge. Galamian discussed four types of position changes as listed below:

1. The same finger playing notes before and after the shift
2. The shift is executed by the note before the shift and a new finger plays the arrival note
3. The shift is executed by the finger that plays the arrival note
4. A finger stretches to play a note and the hand follows later

⁶⁴ Galamian, 24.

Galamian affirmed that the speed, or the timing, of the shift should be in proportion to the tempo of the passage. He also contended that the ear played a vital role in position changing and was responsible for guiding the hand at all times. To conclude, Galamian documented the role of the bow in position changing, stating that a slower bow-speed, coupled with less pressure, would reduce the sound of the shift. Galamian also stated that some types of shifts, for example the portamento and the glissando, were expressive shifts and, therefore, the audibility of the shift was important. In expressive shifts a heavier weight in the bow, and a slower finger motion could be employed.

Auer discussed the importance of practising thirds, fourths, sixths, simple-octaves, fingered-octaves, tenths and three- and four-note chords to increase finger strength, suppleness, and to facilitate inaudible position changes. Flesch also included the importance of practising these double-stops, as in his opinion they form an important part of the basic forms of left-hand technique.

Galamian believed that the practice of double-stops that incorporated the semitone, (ie sixths and augmented fourths), were important in developing good intonation. Octaves were also encouraged to help set up the hand, in the basic framework. In addition, Galamian detailed the importance of not over-pressing with the left-hand in order to keep two strings down at once.

Vibrato, contended Auer, was an expressive device that should not be over-used or used to disguise bad intonation and inferior tone production. Auer proposed that the use of vibrato be limited to the height of phrases, and to add slight colouring to a particular note or passage. In his mind, vibrato should be within the complete control of the performer and should never become automatic.

Galamian differentiated three types of vibrato: the arm, the wrist and the finger. Within these types, he stated that the intensity, width and speed could be varied. Galamian contended that a performer should be capable of using all types of vibrato, interchangeably, and be able to vary all components at will, therefore

having total “vibrato control.”⁶⁵ Galamian conceded that the use of vibrato was dependent upon musical taste and that one should not forget the music’s stylistic context. With this, Galamian contended that the colouring, and therefore vibrato, should be different in Mozart, from that employed in Brahms.

Galamian discussed problems often associated with vibrato, including: the intonation of the vibrato; the direction of the vibrato-motion; the speed of the vibrato; double-stops with the vibrato; and finally, the continuity of the vibrato. In general, Galamian believed that it was important for all types vibrato to oscillate to the flatter side of the pitch.

In accordance with the views of Auer, Galamian believed that vibrato should not become a mannerism, occurring on every note. Flesch also concurred with the views of Auer and Galamian with regard to vibrato, and believed that vibrato should be employed to heighten musical expression and not as a mechanical habit. In contrast to Galamian, Flesch stated that the vibrato should oscillate evenly around the exact pitch centre of the note, and not have a preference for a higher or lower pitch. In general, Flesch commented that a faster vibrato was more preferable than a slower vibrato, and that the character, animation and duration of the motion were inherently linked to the player’s personality.

The eminent cellist Pablo Casals (1876-1973) once stated that “intonation is a matter of conscience.”⁶⁶ Auer in particular stressed the necessity of attention to detail with regard to semitones, and the importance of practising chromatic scales for intonation. Galamian’s commentary on the building of fine intonation rested “mainly on the sense of touch in combination with the guidance of the ear.”⁶⁷ He also stated that it was vital to maintain the basic framework of the hand, in the octave shape, in all positions along the fingerboard. Good intonation was also aided by the principle of double contact, where the thumb and the side of the first

⁶⁵ Ibid., 37.

⁶⁶ Pablo Casals in Ruggiero Ricci, *Left-Hand Violin Technique* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1988), 56.

⁶⁷ Galamian, 19.

finger both touch their respective sides of the neck.⁶⁸ Double contact should only be maintained lightly, as any clutching, contended Galamian, could provide an impediment to left-hand technique. The final area of intonation discussed by Galamian, was the 'type' of intonation to use: whether to play in a 'tempered' pitch or in mean-tone tuning. Galamian stated that the performer must develop highly sensitive ears and adjust the tuning according to individual situations.

Parallelling Galamian's discussion, Flesch stated that two things were important for good intonation: most importantly the use of the ear in conjunction with left-hand and arm technique. Flesch contended that intonation was the result of all aspects of left-hand and arm technique and "to this main end [intonation] all mechanical procedures developed by the living organism or our left arm are subordinated."⁶⁹

3.3.1.2 Right-hand/arm technique

Flesch contended that the mechanism of the right arm was more complicated than that of the left, as the bowing-arm is not in direct contact with the string, but rather acts through the bow. With regard to holding the bow, Auer claimed that he "found it a purely individual matter, based on physical and mental laws which is impossible to analyse or explain mathematically."⁷⁰ Auer believed that the most important instruction to be given to the young student, with regard to bow technique, was to strive to sing continuously on the violin.

In contrast to Auer, Flesch and Galamian were prescriptive in their directions on how to hold the bow. Both Flesch and Galamian gave detailed descriptions of the role of each finger, and of the role of the thumb. Flesch proposed that all component parts of the right arm (the fingers, hand, lower and upper arm) were involved in the task of bowing and in the creation of an uninterrupted vibration of

⁶⁸ Ibid., 22.

⁶⁹ Flesch, vol. 1, 19.

⁷⁰ Auer, 12.

the string. Of these components, Flesch believed that the fingers were of the utmost importance.

Flesch described three styles of bow hold: the German; the Franco-Belgian; and the Russian. Of these, he contended that the newest style, the Russian, was the most successful as it required the “minimum development of strength” for the “greatest tonal result.”⁷¹ The Russian bow hold required that the lower arm be rolled outward from the elbow, providing a strengthened index finger on the bow. The index finger, was the finger in Flesch’s opinion, that acted primarily for tone production and the little finger acted for “tone prevention.”⁷²

Galamian’s discussion on the bow-hold was the most detailed of the three teachers. He began with a general statement that holding the bow was “subject to constant modification as the bow moves from one end to the other...as the player changes his dynamics, bowing styles, and tonal qualities.”⁷³ Galamian also stated that the bow hand was based around a circle being formed with the tip of the thumb and the second finger. In summary, Galamian stated that “the correct bow grip must be a comfortable one; all fingers are curved in a natural, relaxed way; no single joint...[should be]...stiffened; and the correctly resulting flexibility must allow all of the natural springs in the fingers and the hand to function easily and well.”⁷⁴

Tone production, stated Flesch “represents the noblest portion of the collective technique of violin playing. Pure tone is the most valid interpreter of emotion.”⁷⁵ Tone production was also vitally important to Auer who believed that the use of the wrist was central to the production of tone. He also stated that an individual’s tone was composed from physical characteristics and from natural instinct, and that having a beautiful tone must be the ambition of every violinist. Written advice on tone production cannot replace the spoken word and demonstration, which is

⁷¹ Flesch, vol. 1, 51.

⁷² Ibid., 53.

⁷³ Galamian, 45.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 47.

why Auer believed, with regard to this aspect of a violinist's technique, the quality of instruction is imperative.

Flesch noted that while the left-hand is responsible for the number of vibrations on any given note, the role of the right hand is to set the strings themselves vibrating. He stated that tone is produced through a regular oscillation of vibration, and noise is produced when any irregularities are present in the oscillation pattern. Flesch detailed that

the production of a good tone is the result first, of a correct administration of pressure, determined by shading, length of stroke, portion of bow used, length of strings and number of strings; secondly of the correct point of contact between bow and string. The exact point of contact (something which takes place intuitively in advanced bowing technique) in which lies the secret of good tone production.⁷⁶

With regard to tone production, Galamian considered two main facets: the flexibility of the spring system of the right arm and the importance of the bow travelling at right angles to the strings. Within these two areas are three more factors that contribute to good tone production, as discussed by Flesch: bow speed, bow pressure, and sounding point. In Galamian's opinion, listening intently will "automatically bring forth the necessary coordination of all elements involved. Thus, listening ability becomes of paramount importance in finding the right procedure to adopt."⁷⁷

Galamian then discussed that for any one instance, there were many different combinations of the three factors for tone production. Generally speaking, Galamian stated that there are two basic types of sound: one relying predominantly on speed and the other on pressure. The two types vary in terms of colour and character. Basically the first type tends to have a lighter, looser sound

⁷⁵ Flesch, vol. 1, 81.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Galamian, 58.

and the second a darker dense character. Galamian recommended that violinists learn how to utilise all combinations of sound types in order to have a variable palette of tonal colours. In addition to the use of the bow, the addition of the various types of vibrato would increase the number of tonal permutations infinitely.

3.3.2 Musicianship

Auer believed that for the student, “nuance, the soul of interpretation,” was an essential part of his/her technical development, and was the “sole means of raising his execution to an artistic level.”⁷⁸ He stated that for a student to avoid tonal monotony, he must employ nuance and a strict observation of all the composers’ markings. He also commented that the violin was capable of a multitude of tonal variations, unlike many other instruments, particularly wind instruments. Auer described four areas through which a student could employ nuance: dynamics, tone colour or timbre, tempo and rhythm. Nuance, was the “principle of infinite change...[a] specific application of Nature’s variability of mood and tone to musical ends and aims.”⁷⁹

Auer believed that temperamental performing could not substitute nuance. He also warned that nuance could become so individualised as to become an affectation, providing performances that are caricatures of the musical intention. Auer stated of phrasing that “the art of giving musical phrases...the right degree of relief, the right allotment of shading and emphasis, with due regard for their melodic and rhythmic character for their interrelationship.”⁸⁰ Auer asserted that phrasing was a highly personal art, and that really fine execution of phrasing was reliant upon technical perfection.

⁷⁸ Auer, 61.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 66.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 70.

With regard to style, Auer was insistent that a performer plays “in a distinctive and intrinsically appropriate way.”⁸¹ However, he was not an advocate of performing in a style for the sake of historical accuracy only. He believed that it was beauty, and not tradition, that was central to musical style: that the rules of historical performance can be dispensed with and beauty should be the highest goal.

Flesch gave the most detailed stylistic account of the three teachers. Galamian’s documentation, incidentally, was limited to the discussion of different vibrato types in the music of Brahms and Mozart. Flesch detailed many stylistic considerations, some relating to style in musical composition, and some relating to the style of musical interpretation. These stylistic elements included the era and the individual nature of various composers, the type of music (whether it is operatic or for the church); the aesthetic style, (sentimental or romantic), and lastly Flesch detailed the various types of nationalistic styles, for example, the French and the Russian.

Flesch believed that the performer must have a comprehensive understanding and experience of all types of musical style, to do justice to the performance of the wide range of violinistic repertoire. Flesch did state, however, that in his opinion, the concentration upon one stylistic element was “no more than a psychic limitation,”⁸² and the performer should not be limited by style, but should approach all repertoire in a free and unconstrained manner.

Galamian stated that “interpretation is the final goal of all instrumental study.”⁸³ He also stated that in his opinion, a complete technique was not sufficient for successful performance. In addition to technique, the violinist must thoroughly understand the meaning of the music, must use his creative imagination and have a “personal emotional approach to the work if his rendition is to be lifted above the dry and pedantic.”⁸⁴ Galamian believed that interpretation, if it was to be “truly

⁸¹ Ibid., 75.

⁸² Flesch, vol. 2, 60.

⁸³ Galamian, 6.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

artistic”⁸⁵ could not be taught by the teacher, and the teacher’s role was to encourage the students’ initiative and to strive to better their sense of style and taste.

3.3.3 Practice/work ethic

The understanding of practice techniques, an individual’s work ethic, and the knowledge of the vast ‘key areas’ outlined above, were, according to Auer, Flesch and Galamian, vital characteristics for the consummate violinist. In the introduction to his text, Auer stated that “ambitious young musicians habitually fail to realize that it takes years and years of unremitting toil...in order to surmount the obstacles with which nature – and often man as well – will obstruct the road.”⁸⁶

Auer believed the type of practice a student was able to engage in would influence their future. He believed that a student must develop a highly critical process of self-examination, having stated “for it is this mental labour which is the true source of all progress.”⁸⁷ If this process did not take place Auer contended that students were merely wasting their time by perfecting faults. Auer stated that students should practice in thirty to forty minute sessions and rest for ten to fifteen minutes between sessions. One of Auer’s philosophies, paramount in *Violin Playing, As I Teach It*, was the vital importance of discipline.

Flesch defines practising as the “road which leads from ‘*inability*’ to perform a succession of notes to ‘*ability*’ to do so.”⁸⁸ He also states that practice is not only a necessity but is a ‘*necessary evil*.’⁸⁹ Flesch contends that the goals of practice need to be: the discovery of the most energy efficient fingering and bowings; the transformation of conscious movements into unconscious ones; and also the

⁸⁵ Ibid., 7-8.

⁸⁶ Auer, xii.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 14.

⁸⁸ Flesch, vol. 1, 104.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 105.

execution of the above named principles without damaging the artist's individual personality. Flesch warns against frequent repetitions in practice, as they can injure the creative spirit.

In addition, Flesch makes the assumption that the artist will practice for four hours in the day, and divides this time into three categories. Firstly; one hour of general technique (scales etc), secondly; an hour and a half of applied technique (technical study of repertoire) and finally another hour and a half of repertoire performance practice.

Chapter four of *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* provides the reader with an insight into the Galamian ideal on the work ethic. Galamian stated that:

The road to violin mastery is long and arduous, and great application and perseverance are needed to reach the goal. Talent helps ease the way, but in itself cannot be a substitute for the hard work of practicing.⁹⁰

Galamian believed that the skill of efficient working was one of the most precious attributes that a performer could have. Galamian wished to impress upon the student that:

Practice has to be a continuation of the lesson, that it is nothing but a process of self-instruction in which, in the absence of the teacher, the student has to act as the teacher's deputy, assigning himself definite tasks and supervising his own work.⁹¹

In practice, Galamian believed that it was vital to constantly maintain mental alertness, and to not allow the mind to wander while the body was practising by rote. With regard to the amount of time required for practice, Galamian did not believe in prescribing a set time, rather he felt that the student should experiment and find what was appropriate for the individual, as it was likely to vary considerably. Galamian also contended that there does not necessarily need to be a

⁹⁰ Galamian, 93.

⁹¹ Ibid.

standard practice order for the students as “mixing the material and not dwelling too long on a single item will often help to keep the mind fresh longer.”⁹²

Galamian divided practicing into: building time, interpreting time and performing time. Building time was primarily concerned with overcoming technical problems. Here the student should practice scales and exercises and mental preparation was an important aspect of this type of work. Basically the student should practice progressing from the mind to the muscles, problems that increase in level of difficulty. This process, discussed previously, was called correlation and was of vital importance. Galamian believed that it was a waste of time to practice exercises that one had already mastered. Once one problem was mastered, the student should proceed to the next challenge.

Galamian contended that whenever technical problems were encountered, they must be analysed to determine the nature of the difficulty: intonation, shifting, rhythm, the speed of a particular bowing, the coordination of the hands, and so on. The mind needed to have a clear picture of the movements to be practiced, the technical timing and the anticipated sound. In ‘building’ time, Galamian also stated that tempos should be slow.

During interpreting time, the most attention should be given to musical expressiveness. Mistakes should go uncorrected, as frequent stopping was a “dangerous habit to form, and it can become treacherous in public performance.”⁹³ Galamian stated, however, that it was advantageous to remember any errors so they could be corrected later.

In performing time, Galamian believed that it was vital to synthesise musical playing and analytical dissection. This was because the addition of elements such as the vibrato, nuance and dynamics add new factors, not evident in the cold technical study. All passages mastered in isolation must be practised in musical

⁹² Ibid., 94.

⁹³ Ibid., 100.

context. In all types of practice a vital element is the use of the critical ear, to objectively hear one's playing, as an audience in a concert would hear it.

3.3.4 Performance anxiety

Galamian did not discuss nerves in relation to violin playing, in the text *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching*. Auer, however, listed some examples of the great performers who suffered from the affliction: Rubinstein, Joachim and himself. Auer though, did not endeavour to discuss the probable causes nor did he suggest remedies for the difficulty that affects so many performers.

In contrast to Auer and Galamian, Flesch discussed 'stage fright' and stated that its primary cause was a lack of self-confidence on the part of the performer. Flesch contended that a thorough preparation "based on systematic study, which has exhausted the mechanical difficulties, under normal psychic conditions"⁹⁴ and performance practice would guarantee, in most cases, a successful performance. Flesch commented that strengthening the cause of stage fright, a lack of self-confidence, was vital to improving stage fright, rather than addressing its symptoms.

3.3.5 Repertoire

The final two chapters of Auer's *Violin Playing as I Teach It*, examine violin repertoire. Auer discussed repertoire that he studied as a student and repertoire that he advised his students to study. This advice was relatively broad and suggested that the student's repertoire should be greatly varied, "for the accomplished violinist must be musically broad: he must be at home in all the schools and know the repertory of each."⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Flesch, vol. 2, 104.

⁹⁵ Auer, 94.

Flesch includes a detailed summation of the type of repertoire that he would recommend for inclusion in a recital program. In addition, the supplement to the second volume of *The Art of Violin Playing*, provides twelve reproductions of repertoire with varying stylistic considerations. Flesch gives detailed background information on each work and also provides performance annotations.

Galamian commented with regard to repertoire, that the teacher must provide the widest possible variation and should not necessarily choose repertoire that is well suited to the student. For educational benefit, repertoire that covers a student's weakest attributes should be studied. For public performance, however, a program that suits the personality of the student should be chosen.

3.4 A reflection upon the teaching of the 'great masters'

After documenting an overview of the perspectives of the three teachers above, it is instructive for summary purposes to examine what one contemporary writer commented about the teaching styles of Auer, Flesch and Galamian. Boris Schwarz, the author of *Great Masters of the Violin*, had the privileged position of being able to observe and indeed study with many esteemed performers and teachers, in addition to conducting exhaustive social research with students of these musicians.

Schwartz gives detailed accounts of Auer, Flesch and Galamian, their lives and their teaching styles. On Auer, Schwarz states "Auer's position in the history of violin playing is based on his teaching. He gave his imprint to the Russian school, and his influence is reflected through several generations removed."⁹⁶ Schwarz continued to discuss the type of teacher Auer was, and stated:

In technical matters he was no teacher at all; he left the technical preparation of his students to his assistants. Nor did he try to be helpful if the student ran into a technical problem. Nevertheless he was a stickler for

⁹⁶ Boris Schwarz, *Great Masters of the Violin* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 419.

technical accuracy... Clearly, Auer had no “method” of general validity; his greatness lay in sizing up the potential of each student and developing his peculiar individuality. He seemed deliberately vague as to how to grip the bow; he relied on the physical structure of the student’s arm. Nor was he ever inclined to pick up a violin in class and demonstrate...Auer’s teaching began where technique ended: he guided the students’ interpretation and concept of music, he shaped their personalities, he gave them style, taste, musical breeding. He also broadened their horizons, made them read books, guided their behaviour, career and social graces.⁹⁷

Schwarz was a student of many notable pedagogues including Thibaud and Lucien Capet (1873-1928). He stated, however, that it was Carl Flesch who “was the decisive influence and who shaped my concept of violin playing.”⁹⁸ When commenting upon Flesch, Schwarz said that, “he himself recognized a conflict between emotion and intellect in his nature, which inhibited the spontaneous unfolding of his artistic personality.”⁹⁹ As a teacher, Schwarz noted that

[Flesch’s] approach was decidedly analytical, not inspirational. It was teaching on the highest, most mature level. He appealed to the student’s intellect; he taught the fundamental concepts of technique and interpretation, showing how to deal rationally with problems as they arose. “Use your head for your technique and your heart for your music,” was one of Flesch’s principles. He taught how to make the best of one’s talent and how to minimise one’s limitations.¹⁰⁰

Like Schwarz, Ivan Galamian was a student of Lucien Capet. Galamian was also a pupil of Konstantin Mostras, a pupil of Leopold Auer. Schwarz commented that Galamian’s approach to violin playing was

analytical and rational, with minute attention to every technical detail. His method was based on a personal

⁹⁷ Ibid., 419-420.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 328.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 330.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

amalgam of Russian and French traditions, with occasional hints on Flesch's ideas...He was not rigid in his approach: he dealt with every student in an individualised manner and stressed naturalness as [a] guiding principle. The secret of Galamian's success was his ability to develop the innate potential of every student without forcing him into a mold. But the method is unmistakable: one can always recognize a Galamian student by his bow grip... by the intensity of sound, and by the fastidious technical preparation...But it was his personal magnetism as a teacher that brought out the best in his students.¹⁰¹

Some conclusions can be drawn from this examination of the views of three 'great masters' of the art of violin playing. Leopold Auer stated in the opening of his volume, that seventy years prior to the publication of his text "we were far from having the wealth of teaching material at our disposal that we have in these days." Auer continued with the notion that "pedagogy in general has made tremendous progress, and the art of violin teaching has by no means lagged behind."¹⁰² The three volumes examined in Chapter Three could be stated to be products of their time and in some way their differing styles illustrate the progress of pedagogy alluded to by Auer. Galamian's text certainly reflects a less dogmatic and prescriptive view than the highly detailed and analytical views of Flesch.

The survey of 'key areas of modern violin pedagogy' presented in Chapter Three, will provide background and points of comparison when considering, in the next chapter, the style and technical thrusts of the pedagogy of Jan Sedivka.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 548-549.

¹⁰² Auer, 1.

CHAPTER FOUR: DOCUMENTATION OF THE PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH OF JAN SEDIVKA

4.1 Introduction

The pedagogical approach of Jan Sedivka has evolved from the rich and varied life experiences as described in Chapters One and Two. In the words of Peter Scott¹ “Jan as a teacher has brought to bear a unique blend of gifts, a wide experience, and a warm and generous nature.”² Through his work at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music and the Tasmanian String Summer Schools, Sedivka has taught a vast number of students in Australia (as listed in Appendix Three). Many of these students have established careers as performers and teachers and have made significant contributions to Australian string life.

As stated in Chapter One, a wealth of original views regarding Sedivka and his teaching have been gleaned through the combination of the author’s own experiences as a student, the observation of many lessons and classes, the preliminary written questionnaire and an extensive series of oral interviews. Sedivka has been teaching in Australia for forty years, and the fifteen interviews conducted included representative students and colleagues from each five-year period of Sedivka’s teaching years. Interviews were also conducted with people who have been associated with Sedivka throughout the evolution of his career in Australia. The names of the interviewees have been withheld due to the provision of privacy, and thus have been identified by number only. The information thus acquired will be presented and discussed in this chapter.

The focus of the ‘great masters’ treatises outlined in the previous chapter as ‘key areas of violin pedagogy’ indicate important benchmarks for comparison between

¹ Peter Scott was the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Professor of Geography at the University of Tasmania.

² David Mercer, ed., *Festschrift Jan Sedivka* (Hobart: University of Tasmania, 1982), Preface.

Auer, Flesch, Galamian and Sedivka. Sedivka's teaching obviously incorporates significant content in the same key areas, however his philosophy and process have emerged as highly significant. While it is difficult to capture every subtlety of Sedivka's pedagogy, the author has attempted to document the major elements as indicated by the acquired information. It also must be acknowledged that although the intention has been to examine and to gain an understanding of Sedivka's pedagogy over the full period of his influence in Australia, the author's personal experience has primarily been of the years 1998-2001. Consequently there is an emphasis on these later years.

4.2 Pedagogical philosophy

Pedagogy broadly encompasses the science and art of teaching. Paul Ernest, a modern educationalist, has said that "pedagogy is merely a theory of techniques for achieving the ends of communicating or offering the selected knowledge or experiences to learners in a way consistent with [certain] values."³ Sedivka's notion of pedagogy runs tangentially to this definition. Pedagogy was once described by him as, "how to make playing the violin complicated, if not impossible, and then how to overcome the manufactured complications."⁴ On another occasion Sedivka stated that "learning to play the violin is not the attainment of information, but rather is the discovery of what one already knows."⁵ While such statements may have been said in jest, they contain kernels of truth and therefore help illustrate and typify the individual and perhaps idiosyncratic nature of Sedivka's pedagogical belief system.

Referring again to Ernest's definition, that pedagogy is "...communicating... selected knowledge or experiences to learners in a way consistent with [certain]

³ Paul Ernest, "The One and the Many" in Leslie P. Steffe and Jerry Gale, eds, *Constructivism in Education* (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1995), 484.

⁴ Violin lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 7 April 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

⁵ Violin lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 10 June 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

values,”⁶ Sedivka’s own pedagogical style appears to be guided by a set of personal values or tenets. These can be summarised as follows:

1. All information and opinions are worthy of careful consideration and can, should and must be viewed from many perspectives
2. There are no ‘correct’ physiological ways to execute technical and musical tasks
3. All students are worthy of equal consideration
4. That everything one needs to know how to do on the violin, is already known in life, just not always in relation to the violin
5. All musicians are students, located at various points along the road of knowledge

The first three tenets documented above refer to Sedivka’s notion that ‘nothing is absolute,’ and that information and opinions cannot be limited by specifics. Sedivka appears to insist upon constant questioning and growth, both of his students and of himself. A famous adage of Sedivka’s is ‘up is down’ and this statement encapsulates much of his pedagogical philosophy. The concept of vertical direction, straightforward and universally understood, is questioned by Sedivka continually. As a concrete example, with regard to the instrumental mechanics on the violin, Sedivka would say “in order to push the string ‘down,’ there must be an equal and opposite ‘up,’ in the string and in the hand.”⁷

The second tenet that “there are no ‘correct’ physiological ways to execute technical and musical tasks” refers to the fact that nothing about playing the violin is absolute, in a physiological way. All players are different and, therefore, each musical and technical context is crucial. Take for example the positioning of the thumb of the left-hand. Auer dictates to students to “place the second finger on the note F, on the D-string, in the first position – if the thumb is directly opposite, on the self-same line, it is in the right place.”⁸ However, Sedivka is rarely so specific in his directions, and suggests that context is of paramount importance. The

⁶ Ernest, Ibid.

⁷ Violin Class, Jan Sedivka, 11 September 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

placement of the thumb of the left-hand, for Sedivka, would depend upon the size of the individual's hand, the note the individual was playing, the note before and the note after, etcetera.

The third pedagogical tenet, that "all students are worthy of equal consideration," reveals a similar rejection of absolutism. It seems that Sedivka does not insist upon a particular type of student, one who has had the appropriate pedigree of training and attained a specific standard, for entry to his studio. However, Sedivka does not teach every 'would-be violinist.' It is only once he has ascertained that a student has musical potential, that he is demonstrably egalitarian in his approach. The tenet also applies to students within his studio: Sedivka does not appear to turn away students who are under-prepared, instead he considers the challenge of finding out why the student has not completed a sufficient amount of preparation. In this way, Sedivka is intent not to 'miss-out' on the teaching or the potential of any individual. It could be said that the focus of Sedivka's interest in teaching is in the individual and how his knowledge relates to the individual, not in the information in isolation.

"Everything one needs to know how to do on the violin is already known in life, just not always in relation to the violin."⁹ This tenet refers to the fact that Sedivka's teaching continually strives to simplify technique by relating violin playing to every-day life. Ivan Galamian, in his seminal work, *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching*, addressed the topic of position changing and described the shift as "an action of the entire arm and hand, including all of the fingers and the thumb. The flexibility of the thumb, important for all facets of the left technique, is nowhere more essential than shifting."¹⁰ In contrast, as previously stated, Sedivka would ask a student if they could "scratch their nose with the left-hand"¹¹ and then articulate that the action described by Galamian and that of scratching one's nose

⁸ Leopold Auer, *Violin Playing as I Teach It* (New York: Dover Publications, 1921), 12.

⁹ Violin Lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 10 June 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

¹⁰ Ivan Galamian, *The Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* (London: Prentice-Hall, 1962), 24.

were identical. Sedivka's version, however, refers to an action commonplace to the student, rendering the less familiar action of shifting, easy to remember and comprehend. With regard to this relationship between life experience and violin playing, Leon Stemler stated that Sedivka "takes his instrumental pedagogy from the practical aspects of one's everyday life. Movements on an instrument are like movements anywhere else in the world, and common sense applies to both."¹²

Sedivka's tenet that "all musicians are students at various points along the road of knowledge" describes one of Sedivka's strong philosophical principles, that there be no differentiation between the role of the teacher and the student. Sedivka stated that he hopes that he "will learn something in every lesson" and that he sees that "teaching and learning are two sides of the same coin."¹³ The teacher is merely further along the same journey of knowledge, that the student is travelling, and does not represent the destination of knowledge, but rather has a 'privileged view' of information. Sedivka holds the view that all musicians must actively engage with the learning cycle.¹⁴

4.3 Pedagogical content

4.3.1 Technique and posture

It has become apparent from many hours of observation, reinforced by the results of the preliminary questionnaire and interviews, that Sedivka's teaching is pervaded by the passion to make violin playing easier. The easier the control over the instrumental mechanics of the violin, the easier it is to achieve the aim of 'excellence of musicianship.' Sedivka believes, in agreement with Flesch and Galamian, that technique is the means for acquiring this end; his principal goal to find the most natural and appropriate technique for each individual. One student described Sedivka's understanding of technique as the following:

¹¹ Violin Lesson, Jan Sedivka, 5 March 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

¹² Leon Stemler, "The Tasmanian String Summer School," *The Australian Journal of Music Education* (May 1975): 20.

¹³ Jan Sedivka, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

¹⁴ Jan Sedivka, interviewed by author, 13 June 2001, tape recording.

It is a means to an end, which is the final expressiveness on the violin; to make the instrument and preoccupation with instrumental difficulties as unimportant as possible and as easy as possible, in order to get to the expressiveness of the music. However, he is fascinated by technique as something to think about, and intellectually gets excited about issues of technique.¹⁵

Many schools of violin playing require the rigid adherence to a set of predetermined technical and musical formulae. The research for this exegesis has revealed, however, that Sedivka does not require this type of strict regime and does not transform students' technique in his own image. Rather, he builds and moulds personal characteristics already present but perhaps underdeveloped. One former student stated that "I have had lessons before [my time with Sedivka] where I came out with a bow arm that looked like everyone else's, except I could not do anything with it!"¹⁶

The technique of playing the violin encompasses an infinite number of component parts, in addition to the many permutations of these parts, as discussed in the previous chapter.¹⁷ Sedivka's attitude towards posture is to find the natural balance for each individual's stance. A former student commented that "Sedivka was an evangelist for setting things up in what he saw was a natural way."¹⁸ If a student's posture, however, did not present physiological and technical hindrances, he would not attempt to change the set-up. If the posture was problematic, Sedivka would endeavour to align the angle of the hips, feet and shoulders, so the three areas of the body comfortably sat at the same angle, as three vertical layers. In Sedivka's view, the position of the violin and use of the shoulder and chin rests, varies according to the individual and their physiological needs, and all solutions are correspondingly individual. If a violinist was particularly small, Sedivka would recommend the violin and left-arm be positioned to the right, to facilitate the utilisation of the entire bow. Conversely, if

¹⁵ Respondent 3, interviewed by author, 23 February 2001, tape recording.

¹⁶ Respondent 11, interviewed by author, 11 April 2001, tape recording.

¹⁷ See list of 'key areas of modern violin pedagogy,' Appendix Two.

a student had particularly long arms, Sedivka would recommend that the left-arm and violin be placed to the left of the body. A former student commented that “the position of the violin was determined by Sedivka, by the angle that it made with the bow...he would manipulate my arms in and around, so that the bow could reach at the tip.”¹⁹

It appears that Sedivka’s attitude to posture changed through the course of his teaching in Australia. Students from the early days commented upon the fact that Sedivka was “almost evangelical about promoting a way of holding the instrument and adapting that to each individual.”²⁰ Another student from Sedivka’s teaching days in Brisbane commented that “his view on posture was that it was crucial and fundamental to violin playing.”²¹ In more recent years, it could be contended that general posture was no longer a focus of Sedivka’s teaching. The possible reasons for this change will be examined in Chapter Five.

4.3.1.1 Left-hand/arm technique

One area of technique that emerged as consistently central to the teaching of Sedivka was the mechanism of the left-hand. This mechanism is required to act in many ways, including the fact that each finger must play numerous notes with accurate positioning, in many varied patterns, and that the whole hand is required to move up and down and across the finger board whenever dictated by the music. The left-hand and fingers must also combine in a rocking motion to effect a vibrato, which has many guises and contributes significantly to the expressive palette of the string player.

Sedivka has been fascinated by the fact that string players are required to use the four fingers of the left-hand in an equal way, despite the fundamental anatomical differences between those fingers. Sedivka believes that one has to counteract the

¹⁸ Respondent 9, interviewed by author, 5 April 2001, tape recording.

¹⁹ Respondent 8, interviewed by author, 13 March 2001, tape recording.

²⁰ Respondent 9, interviewed by author, 5 April 2001, tape recording.

²¹ Respondent 12, interviewed by author, 11 June 2001, tape recording.

innate differences in order to efficiently and ergonomically accommodate the fingerboard and also violinistic repertoire. He is surprised by the lack of understanding and common sense that most intelligent musicians and schools apply to the fingers' use. Many schools of violin pedagogy do not incorporate the use of the fourth finger in the rudimentary teaching of the left-hand.²² In Sedivka's opinion, this leads to a common lack of facility of the fourth finger. Sedivka commonly makes an analogy between the four fingers and the legs of a quadruped, and remarks "does a doggie begin his life with three legs and grow a fourth when he is older and wiser?"²³

The general problem with the use of the fourth finger, in Sedivka's opinion, is its shape, angle and position in relation to the balance of the hand. In most instances the hand is oriented and balanced around the first two fingers and the fourth is left to stretch for its notes. A former student remarked that "Sedivka would always joke with me about my Suzuki background, particularly with my hand being oriented towards fingers one, two and three, not two, three and four."²⁴ It could be stated that Sedivka believes that if the orientation is shifted to the second and third fingers the hand can be balanced, and can play each note of the hand position in an equal way. This coupled with, increasing the amplitude and decreasing the radius of the fourth finger, allows this finger to have a weight behind it that is relative to that of the other three fingers. John Curro, a student of Sedivka from 1961, documented the principle of left-hand balance in his article "Upbeat and Focus" in the *Festschrift Jan Sedivka* volume. Curro stated

The four fingers vary in size and strength on every hand, although the variations are not always of the same degree in every hand. No amount of finger exercises will alter this relative difference but only increase the efficiency of each finger to its maximum possibility. In

²² For example, the Suzuki method does not incorporate the fourth finger until the student is half-way through book one. A substantial amount of time has elapsed since commencement of tuition at this point.

²³ Violin Lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 10 June 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

²⁴ Respondent 8, interviewed by author, 13 March 2001, tape recording.

order to play fast brilliant passages with maximum clarity the thumb should assume a compromise position so that it helps to support the fourth finger, which is the weakest. This means that it will leave the other fingers slightly weakened and gives a resultant evenness of strength to all four fingers.²⁵

Sedivka employs the analogy between quadrupeds and the left-hand extensively, and insists that a ‘doggie’ would not voluntarily walk with its weight on the front legs and drag the hind legs. However, violinists do it all the time. Sedivka also relates the human legs and body to the action of the left-hand; “the hips are like the knuckles, and the legs are like the fingers; we do not walk with our hips behind our legs, we walk with them above, so why does one play in this manner!”²⁶

Further illustrations of Sedivka’s method of teaching left-hand technique can be gleaned from the stories documented below. Sedivka has said

We have four fingers, right? How many legs do we have? Two, yes? How many fingers? Four. We must treat our left-hand as a little chimpanzee might. A quadruped would not walk comfortably on two legs and then strain and stretch the other two to take more steps. No, he would balance the body on all four legs and rest the body on all four legs. We must shift the body of the hand to rest ‘in four legs.’²⁷

The knuckles of the left-hand must become the hips of the hand, where the weight is evenly distributed through the fingers. One does not walk stretching one leg in front of the other, bending the other and placing uneven strain on the hips.²⁸

A pussycat would do something intelligent on four legs; we do something stupid with four fingers.²⁹

²⁵ John Curro, “Upbeat and Focus” in *Festschrift Jan Sedivka*, David Mercer, ed., 8.

²⁶ Violin Lesson, Jan Sedivka, 21 May 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Violin Class, Jan Sedivka, 11 September 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

²⁹ Violin Lesson, Jan Sedivka, 11 August 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

We have three good fingers, they play perfectly and when we are grown up we will learn how to use our fourth finger. But be careful: the fourth finger is only for very advanced players. We have the belief that if we practice very hard we will be able to learn how to use the fourth finger. This is rubbish, it is something we can do in life already but just not on the violin.³⁰

We must use doggie intelligence, and learn to think like a quadruped not a biped.³¹

It is interesting to note the fascination that Sedivka exhibits with regard to the movement of the left-hand and the comparison to the movement of animals. Perhaps this stemmed back to Sedivka's childhood, with a father who was a country veterinarian and a qualified Doctor of Veterinary Science.³² A former associate of Sedivka stated that "perhaps an interest in how limbs worked was in Sedivka as he was growing up."³³

Finding the most effective and balanced orientation of the left-hand fingers, coupled with effective thumb placement defines hand position. It could be documented that Sedivka does not view the role of the thumb in abstraction, but rather views its role in relation to the position of the fingers. Sedivka's notion of the role of the thumb is that

The thumb plays the role of the fulcrum. It supports and counterbalances what the fingers are doing. For example, if the fingers go down the thumb must go up, if the fingers go to the left the thumb must go to the right and vice versa. You need to decide where to put the fingers and then work out where the thumb should go. If you want to pull your ear you don't think first where the thumb should go, you just do it!³⁴

³⁰ Violin Lesson, Jan Sedivka, 11 August 1999, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

³¹ Violin Class, Jan Sedivka, 23 March 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

³² Private conversation, between Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 2 October 2001.

³³ Respondent 6, interviewed by author, 11 March 2001, tape recording.

³⁴ Violin Lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 11 August 1999, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

Through observation, the author has gleaned that in Sedivka's opinion the position of the left arm is found according to the assumed position of the hand and arm. For example, if the hand is executing a phrase on the 'g' string in first position, that is to the left side of the fingerboard, the arm must accommodate this configuration by assuming an attitude to the right of the neck of the violin. In this way the integrity of the hand, wrist and arm position is maintained.

Linked with left-hand and arm position, and the use of the thumb, is the execution of finger extensions either with the first finger 'back' or the fourth finger 'up.' In Sedivka's view, the key to the extension is the height of the hand, arm and wrist in relation to the fingerboard. The lower the hand, or the lower the level of the knuckles, the wider apart the fingers naturally fall and therefore do not need to be 'stretched.' Sedivka will often physically manipulate a student's hand placement to demonstrate this concept. Whilst doing so, he will ask that "its not stuck together with pins is it,"³⁵ with regard to the inflexibility often encountered, and in an effort to induce muscle release in the hand. Also related is the device "opening-up the hand backwards" to execute an extension, instead of employing a discrete shift.³⁶ Sedivka relates the extension and the hand position to a flower:

The hand is a little like a flower: at the base everything is small. We hold the thumb in close to the palm. As we go higher up the fingers stretch out. We always try to do the opposite!³⁷

The vertical action of the left-hand fingers is fundamental to playing the violin. The action not only allows the note to be 'played,' but contributes to precisely how the note is played. The tone and intonation are affected when a finger's weight, shape and angle are altered. It is apparent that, in Sedivka's opinion, the notes produced by the fourth finger are often inferior due to the inadequacy of their use.

³⁵ Violin Lesson, Jan Sedivka, 11 August 1999, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

³⁶ Respondent 8, interviewed by author, 13 March 2001, tape recording.

³⁷ Violin lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 17 August 1999, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

Finger pressure affects intonation, tone quality and the dynamic of any particular note. To effect a note with 'good' tone and intonation, the note must have an appropriate weight. This weight, according to Sedivka, originates in the finger, the hand, the arm and the shoulder, and requires a balance of energy in a downward and in an upward direction. Mono-directional pressure and weight can only lead to the tightening of the left-hand.³⁸

Sedivka promotes an "even finger pressure throughout the hand."³⁹ This is coupled with the balance of the hand; lessening the pressure of the first finger; and increasing that of the fourth finger. Finger pressure also relates to tone production. Obviously the bow is a major factor in tone production, however "the varying pressures of the bow and the left-hand, and the infinite variation of the two, are crucial to the better understanding of the tonal possibilities of the violin."⁴⁰

Another area central to the pedagogy of Sedivka is the organisation of the fingers of the left-hand. A former pupil stated that "finger organisation was ninety percent of what he talked about."⁴¹ Any musical phrase dictates a sequence of pitches to produce the required 'tune.' For example, the opening of the Ballade of Jánáček's Violin Sonata (as given in Appendix Twelve), requires the violinist to play the sequence b', e", c#", b', g#", a'. In Sedivka's opinion, to order the fingers in the same way as the composer, is not the most economical approach, nor will it produce the best results. If, instead, the fingers are placed in the progression, b', e" then c#", g#" and b', concurrently, with the final a' prepared in the hand but not placed on the fingerboard until the after g#" semiquaver, the sound of the action of the left-hand will be 'cleaner.' Also, this change in finger organisation requires less movement and is, therefore, more economical. (see Appendix Thirteen for other examples of efficient finger organisation).

³⁸ Violin lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 30 March 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

³⁹ Respondent 8, interviewed by author, 13 March 2001, tape recording.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

It could be argued that Sedivka's theory on hand position, like that of Flesch, is to prepare as many notes as early as possible. However, if the music dictates that a certain note cannot be placed on the fingerboard (due to the necessity of playing a lower note on the same string), in many cases Sedivka promotes that the position be 'felt' in the hand. The objective of early preparation is to reduce the number of movements in the hand and therefore increase the ease of execution and cleanness of action. Sedivka believes that there are "two sequences involved with playing a note or a grouping of notes: firstly, one has to prepare the mind and the body; and secondly one plays the note."⁴²

The key area, 'holding the fingers down,' is associated with the issue of finger organisation. Notes in a descending sequence are produced by "the action of lifting the preceding note"⁴³ and, therefore, the 'new note' must be in place on the fingerboard before preceding note is played. It appears that, in agreement with Flesch, Sedivka's view is that the fingers should be left in place so that the action required to play a specific phrase is minimised. If, however, the freedom of the hand is inhibited by the act of leaving the fingers down, for example in an extension, the fingers should be released.⁴⁴

An important correlation exists between the organisation of the left-hand fingers, their early preparation, and the necessary horizontal action (action of moving the fingers left to right, and right to left across the fingerboard). Sedivka's viewpoint of the 'horizontal action of the fingers' is that this area is often lacking in a player's left-hand technique. For example, in an examination report of a former student, Sedivka wrote that "the knowledge of the vertical distances on the fingerboard is considerable, however, the knowledge of the horizontal distances is almost entirely lacking."⁴⁵ Traditionally, students are rigorously trained in the two-dimensional movements of the left-hand: the 'up and down' of the fingers in

⁴² Violin Lesson, Jan Sedivka, 11 August 1999, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

⁴³ Violin Lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 15 February 1999, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Former Sedivka student, Masters examination report, June 1998.

the one position and the ‘up and down’ of the fingers along the length of the fingerboard. Rarely do methods discuss the need for the players’ intimate knowledge of the horizontal distances of the fingerboard.

In Sedivka’s point of view the timing of the action of the left-hand fingers is crucial to the technique of the left-hand. If the timing is miscalculated, corresponding inaccuracies of intonation, finger pressure, and finger organisation can result: “the timing is everything.”⁴⁶ A former student stated that “if I had to sum it up, I would say his genius is in helping one to make discoveries about the timing and focus of movement, within the mechanics of playing.”⁴⁷

‘Fingering’ is an area of constant inquiry in the pedagogy of Sedivka; never will he prescribe a definitive fingering for any given phrase. Fingering can be examined as a technical means, as a means of expression, and as a means for colouring. From a purely technical perspective, Sedivka, like Galamian, is guided by the principle that a musician should have the facility to execute a phrase with any desired fingering. In this way, Sedivka believes that if a performer does not have the facility to play a phrase with a specific fingering, that fingering then becomes the most appropriate choice, in order to gain the required technique. It could be recorded that students of Sedivka often find themselves bombarded with countless fingering permutations. “I have been amazed at how fingerings seemed to pour out of him, like water out of a tap.”⁴⁸ A prominent former student of Sedivka stated that

His knowledge of fingerings was phenomenal. We had multiple fingerings for passages. I would be sent away to decide which one I wanted to use and how I could do it. There was a big emphasis on fingering and, in fact, I think this is a very important part of his teaching.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Violin Lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 1 March 1999, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

⁴⁷ Respondent 3, interviewed by author, 23 February 2001, tape recording.

⁴⁸ Respondent 6, interviewed by author, 11 March 2001, tape recording.

⁴⁹ Respondent 8, interviewed by author, 13 March 2001, tape recording.

Coupled with fingering is the key area ‘position changing,’ another topic that appeared as fundamentally important to Sedivka. As outlined in Chapter Three, Galamian defined position changing as the “action of the entire arm and hand, including all of the fingers and the thumb. The flexibility of the thumb, important for all facets of the left-hand technique, was nowhere more essential than in shifting.”⁵⁰ An alternative definition of position changing could be “the action of gliding with the third finger from the first position to the fourth position, using the first finger as a fulcrum and moving the distance of a perfect fourth.”⁵¹ As documented earlier, and in contrast to these definitions, Sedivka would refuse to be prescriptive and, would simplify the action by asking the student if they could “scratch their nose, with the left-hand.”⁵² Sedivka would emphasise that the action of position changing and nose scratching was identical.

The technique of position changing encompassed a considerable number of facets that Sedivka incorporates into his teaching. However, his primary concern with shifting appeared to be with the fact that many musicians do not incorporate the shift as an integral part of a musical phrase. Instead, they choose simply to execute the action. Sedivka often commented that he hears “note – oh my goodness shift – new note,” as opposed to a “note, linked with a beautiful expressive device and then another note.”⁵³ There are several reasons for this phenomenon; one of these is that, Sedivka believes that musicians often leave the shift too late, or in other words the timing of the position change is not appropriately considered. To this end, Sedivka related the stories below:

If you want to get to the bus in time or if you miss the bus, what do you need to do to get there next time? You need to leave for the bus earlier, my goodness!⁵⁴

Moving to the Door; If you want to leave a room you don’t think right leg, one step forward, then left leg ‘Oh

⁵⁰ Galamian, *Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching* (London: Prentice-Hall, 1962), 24.

⁵¹ Sedivka associate, conversation with author, 23 June 2001.

⁵² Violin Lesson, Jan Sedivka, 19 March 1999, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

⁵³ Violin Class, 15 March 1999, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

⁵⁴ Violin Lesson, Jan Sedivka, 19 March 1999, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

my goodness I can't move my legs', you think 'door'
and the subconscious proceeds to get you to the door.
We should do this when we play, however we think
'note' then 'shift' then 'new note' – it is stupid!⁵⁵

As outlined in connection with the use of the fourth finger, Sedivka often remarks on the oversights in the early years of string teaching. Position changing is often taught in the fourth year of lessons, rather than included as an integral part of learning to play the violin. Sedivka sometimes describes the “note – oh my goodness – note” derogatorily as “AMEB position changing.”⁵⁶ With regard to position changing, portamento and glissando, Sedivka stresses the importance of the release of the left-hand and often uses demonstration as an important element in the teaching of these techniques.⁵⁷

The framework for Galamian's discussion of position changing, as outlined in Chapter Three, incorporates four types of shift. It is apparent that Sedivka leaves the choice of type of shift, as he does with most musical considerations, to the individual's style and taste. As expressed by one former student: “he would leave that kind of musical inspiration as a very personal thing between the student and the rest of the world.”⁵⁸ However, Sedivka encompasses all types of shift in the notion that the player must always prepare for the context of the new note and new position early. For example, Sedivka will remind a player to shift on the string of the new note. Also, if a change of position is to include a change from first position to fifth position, the new context requires the left arm and elbow to be to the right, and closer to the body. It appears that Sedivka's conviction is that the new context should be assumed at the outset of the shift, not while the shift is in progress. Another example is that the hand must attain the position of the new group of notes, preceding the shift, not after the new position has been attained.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Violin Lesson, Jan Sedivka, 1 June 1999, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

⁵⁷ Respondent 8, interviewed by author, 13 March 2001, tape recording.

⁵⁸ Respondent 3, interviewed by author, 23 February 2001, tape recording.

Double-stops, the knowledge of the horizontal distances on the fingerboard, finger organisation and timing are interrelated themes of left-hand technique. Consequently, a considerable number of the principles above can be applied to Sedivka's understanding of double-stops. Double-stops were often used by Sedivka to improve a performer's finger organisation and the early preparation of notes. A former pupil commented, with regard to double stopping, that "the notion of diagonal distances in the hand, predicated on the positioning of the hand further back than just the fingertips, was another revelatory thing in his teaching."⁵⁹ In addition, Sedivka often related the mechanics of double-stopping to how certain animals use their legs:

We play octaves like a kangaroo with a walking stick; the two fingers are the legs and the thumb is the walking stick, supporting the legs. Thirds and fourths; like a camel.⁶⁰

Galamian's text describes three types of vibrato that a performer should be capable of using interchangeably, and be able to vary at will, in the service of expression.⁶¹ Sedivka's views on vibrato appear to be similar, with the aim that his students develop complete control over their vibrato, and encouraging experimentation with vibrato types.⁶² Sedivka sees vibrato as an essential expressive tool that should be used to highlight the tonal colours of a musical phrase. Galamian also discusses the use of vibrato within the context of stylistic considerations. For example, the music of Mozart would require less vibrato, than the music of Brahms. Sedivka does not subscribe to stylistic considerations alone, in accordance with the notion that 'nothing is absolute.' It appears that for Sedivka a performance that is well considered, tasteful, beautiful and well executed, is more important than an emphasis on authenticity.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Violin Lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 19 July 1999, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

⁶¹ Galamian, 37.

⁶² Respondent 8, interviewed by author, 13 March 2001, tape recording.

As with many other aspects of violin technique, vibrato does not escape Sedivka's relation to common, everyday events. Descriptions or visual images that he has used to describe particular types of vibrato include; "your vibrato needs to be like a little doggie on a short chain," when describing a fast and narrow action. When persuading a student to use a more continuous vibrato, Sedivka might say, "break your hand, my goodness,"⁶³ to encourage the student to work vigorously with the left-hand.

Instruction in scales is an area of technique that appears to have evolved greatly throughout Sedivka's time in Australia. In the early days, Sedivka was described as being "a terribly tough teacher, very, very tough" as the expectation of good technique was incredibly high.⁶⁴ Students from this time, recounted that Sedivka required the practice of all scales, "the lot"⁶⁵ of studies and technical exercises including the Carl Flesch *Scale System*, Otakar Ševčík *School of Violin Technique*, *Op. 1-9*, Rodolphe Kreutzer (1766-1831) *42 études ou caprices*, Pierre Gaviniés (1728-1800) *Études*, Jakob Dont (1815-1888) *24 Studies*, *Op. 37* and Nicolò Paganini (1782-1840) *24 Caprices*, *Op. 1*. The quantity of technical training was reflected in the weekly technique classes at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music. In these classes the students were required to perform the prescribed studies and scales.⁶⁶

In addition to the sheer volume of technical work covered, Sedivka insisted that the level of cerebral engagement in the activity was high. For example, he would ask students to play scales in an unc customary fashion "D major in thirds, four down, two detached, three up," to ensure the constant engagement of the mind.⁶⁷ One student commented that "we would have to come up with as many ideas as he would on how to practice scales."⁶⁸ In this way the practice of scales and technical

⁶³ Violin Lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 17 June 2001, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

⁶⁴ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

⁶⁵ Respondent 8, interviewed by author, 13 March 2001, tape recording.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Respondent 3, interviewed by author, 23 February 2001, tape recording.

⁶⁸ Respondent 8, interviewed by author, 13 March 2001, tape recording.

exercises were not merely rote repetitions of prescribed patterns of notes, but were also exercises for the development of the relationship between the mind and muscles or, in Galamian's words, the "correlation."⁶⁹ To recapitulate from Chapter Three, in Galamian's opinion it is this correlation that holds the key to complete technical control. One student describing Sedivka's technique classes remarked

Oh, the technique classes were such fun in those days because one had to play in front of people and play seven notes to the bow and fourteen, fifteen, different rhythms, seventeen, twenty-four, three then five then three and four, upside down and backwards.⁷⁰

In the later years of Sedivka's teaching in Australia, students and observers recall very little prescription of technical work, for technique's sake alone. When asked if Sedivka prescribed technical work, students of the late 1990s responded "no, never!"⁷¹ This is not to say there was not a high level of technical detail in Sedivka's teaching, but the teaching of 'mechanics for mechanic's sake' was no longer evident. The possible reasons for this change and the ramifications will be reviewed in the conclusions of Chapter Four and in Chapter Five.

Intonation and facility are the result of all of the areas of left-hand technique described previously in this chapter. If a student has 'good' intonation and facility, the application of the left-hand technique has been successful. Another area of interest within intonation that is considered in the tutorship of Sedivka is that of 'intonation as a matter of opinion,' or the "moveable notion of pitch."⁷² Unlike performance on the piano, violinists have a choice as to the pitch placement of the fingers of the left-hand. The range of choice is vast, and can encompass equal temperament, the many types of 'tempered' intonation and the nuances of 'expressive' intonation. It appears that Sedivka, like Galamian, believes that the performer must develop a highly sensitive ear and adjust according to individual

⁶⁹ Galamian, 6.

⁷⁰ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

⁷¹ Respondent 8, interviewed by author, 13 March 2001, tape recording.

⁷² Respondent 5, interviewed by author, 6 March 2001, tape recording

situations and personal taste.⁷³ Sedivka discusses the notion of playing a note within the chord and thinking about intonation vertically, not merely horizontally.⁷⁴ In addition, when playing with a piano, Sedivka is insistent upon performers matching the pitches of the piano.

4.3.1.2 Right hand/arm technique

The concepts of Sedivka's instruction of right-hand technique will now be outlined. It must be noted that, with relatively few exceptions, the majority of interviewees commented that Sedivka's teaching encompassed all of the eighteen areas listed as 'key areas' of right-hand technique (as listed in Appendix Two). However, the general belief of respondents was that the areas of left-hand technique were given more weight than the areas of right-hand technique. A former student commented that although "the left-hand and arm were in the fore... it was not to say that he ignored the bow."⁷⁵ Also noted, was that "while Sedivka can do [and teach] all the different bow strokes, it is perhaps not as remarkable as the things that he can do and get the students to do, with the left-hand."⁷⁶ It appears that Sedivka subscribes to a simplicity of approach to bow technique, and steers away from endless bowing exercises. He would say "you push it up, you pull it down, you push it out and you pull it back."⁷⁷ In addition, it could be stated that Sedivka teaches an artistic use of the bow, rather than approaching it from a purely technical perspective. He discusses its use with phrasing: swinging the bow; saving bow for important notes and lightening the pressure of the bow, all to achieve a greater artistry.⁷⁸

The following anecdote, recounted by Sedivka, illustrates his teaching on the bow arm. As a student violinist, Sedivka had the opportunity to ask Mischa Elman

⁷³ Violin Lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 19 July 1999, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

⁷⁴ Respondent 5, interviewed by author, 6 March 2001, tape recording.

⁷⁵ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

⁷⁶ Respondent 3, interviewed by author, 23 February 2001, tape recording.

⁷⁷ Respondent 5, interviewed by author, 6 March 2001, tape recording.

⁷⁸ Respondent 13, interviewed by author, 11 June 2001, tape recording.

(1891-1967), one of Leopold Auer's finest students, how to make a beautiful sound. Elman's response to Sedivka was to pick up his Stradivarius, play a beautiful note and to say, "Just like that."⁷⁹ Sedivka's teaching on the use of the bow is much like this, primarily using the technique of demonstration to communicate information. An ex-Sedivka pupil commented that Sedivka did not "teach you how to do the different bow strokes...instead it was purely by demonstration and illustration."⁸⁰ Another pupil stated that "the various types of bow strokes were not specified but when they came up, we would talk about the various ways to do them, depending upon what sort of musical effect one wanted to achieve."⁸¹

Sedivka is not prescriptive about how the bow should be held and it appears that he 'rubbishes' the various traditional descriptions such as the 'Franco-Belgian hold,' the 'German bow hold' or the manner in which the French hold the bow. Instead, Sedivka instructs students to "grab the bow at the frog, place it on the string and pull."⁸² Whilst pulling, Sedivka asks the student to feel the string, enjoining them to "just feel the string, my goodness."⁸³ One crucial detail of Sedivka's teaching of bow technique, is his way of defining the perimeters of the ends of the bow (the tip and the nut) and setting the position of the violin and body in relation to these perimeters.⁸⁴

An area of bow technique that is frequently included in Sedivka's instruction, is the level, or angle of the bow and the subsequent changes of angle, the change of string to the right and to the left. As with left-hand technique, Sedivka's notion of bow technique is guided by several principles. Firstly, that the level of the bow is natural for each individual person and situation, and secondly that when a change of string needs to be effected, the body and the mind are prepared early.

⁷⁹ Violin lesson, Jan Sedivka, 10 August 1999, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

⁸⁰ Respondent 8, interviewed by author, 13 March 2001, tape recording.

⁸¹ Violin lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 7 April 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

⁸² Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

⁸³ Violin lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 7 April 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

The most natural angle for the bow could be documented as being dictated by the string the bow is required to play on. It could be contended that, in Sedivka's conception, the angle of the bow, forearm and upper arm should form a level plane. Sedivka, however, would only articulate this concept if the player's bow technique was limited, as he would not change or mould a functioning bow-arm. A former Sedivka student stated that he was "absolutely prepared to give up what he thought if he thought that it did not apply to you."⁸⁵ In addition, the level plane is only appropriate when a passage does not leave the confines of one particular string level. If a passage necessitates the violinist playing several notes on one string, and one on another, Sedivka would remind the player to leave the bow on the string where there are more notes, and to merely deviate with the wrist and forearm, for the single note. Sedivka often jokes when a player over compensates for a change of string in the bow arm: "don't break your arm, my goodness."⁸⁶ Sedivka's instruction appears to be focused on finding the level of the right arm that is the common denominator for the phrase and requires the least deviation to lower or higher strings.

4.3.2 Musicianship

It could be stated that Sedivka's pedagogy and performance are driven by a desire to achieve great musical heights. The teaching of nuance, phrasing and musicianship was recounted by many interviewees, as some of the richest and most enlightening experiences of their time with Sedivka. Some of these views are documented below:

What I learnt musically was the defining aspect of Sedivka's teaching for me; people used to say you go to Sedivka for technique, but that is absolutely absurd. He gave me the chance to consider a phrase in six different ways; it could become quite confusing in a positive sort of way and you would have to make a decision as to

⁸⁴ Respondent 8, interviewed by author, 13 March 2001, tape recording.

⁸⁵ Respondent 11, interviewed by author, 11 April 2001, tape recording.

⁸⁶ Violin Lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 11 August 1999, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

why one would phrase in a certain way. I think that is a very, very important thing.⁸⁷

Musical awareness was a defining aspect of Jan Sedivka's teaching for me more than anything else. He worked with me on phrasing and musicianship. However, in order to achieve this product, I needed to do things differently with my left and my right hand.⁸⁸

Technique is a tool and it should disappear ideally into the background while one pursues the important thing, the expressive turn of phrase.⁸⁹

I find it totally and continually fascinating exploring musicianship with him.⁹⁰

Outlined in Chapter Two were the influences upon Sedivka's playing as a student. Ševčík, Kocián and Rostal, who could be described as masterful technicians, instilled many seeds of future thought in the student Sedivka. In addition, throughout Sedivka's formative years in Europe, he was also privy to the sounds of some of the world's greatest violinists. He calls musicians such as Mischa Elman, Bronislaw Huberman, Joseph Szigeti (1892-1973), Fritz Kreisler (1875-1962), Jeanette Neveu (1919-1949), Jacques Thibault and Jascha Heifetz (1901-1987), "the old boys."⁹¹ It appears that Sedivka has a deep love and respect of the style and the individuality of the 'old boys' and 'pure quintessential romanticism' at its best. In terms of the mechanics of violin performance, Sedivka admits that while the 'old boys' could sometimes be criticised for inaccuracy, was made up for in terms of musical taste, charm and musicianship.⁹² The love and respect for this era and style of violin performance undoubtedly pervades Sedivka's own playing, and teaching style.

Sedivka uses any means possible to communicate to his students a greater understanding of phrasing; how to hear the intricate details of a composer's line,

⁸⁷ Respondent 5, interviewed by author, 6 March 2001, tape recording.

⁸⁸ Respondent 11, interviewed by author, 11 April 2001, tape recording.

⁸⁹ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

⁹⁰ Respondent 3, interviewed by author, 23 February 2001, tape recording.

⁹¹ Violin Class, 26 April 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

how a musical line ebbs and flows and relates to the piano accompaniment. Sedivka has the ability to play almost any piece in the violin repertoire by memory at any time, and regularly demonstrates and plays in unison with the student “I am always amazed at how he can play snatches, if not whole works, from memory.”⁹³ Sedivka will also tell stories and verbalise inconsistencies in a player’s choice of phrasing. These verbalisations, tinged with sarcasm, include “if you like it that way, with a huge accent on every down bow,” “well, if you want to show the audience where every bar line is,” and “if you like to sound like an asthmatic doggie on a short chain.”⁹⁴

The findings indicate that Sedivka is able to illuminate the skeletal pitch plan of any given phrase instantaneously. Moreover, he is able to portray how the rhythmic manifestations of the phrase relate to the pitches. Violin lessons with Sedivka are regularly filled with “can’t you see, there are two minims and four crotchets subdivided into eight quavers!”⁹⁵

Sedivka would often discuss favourite recordings of the ‘old boys,’ “old recordings, stuff from his youth.”⁹⁶ However, these recordings were never used as a teaching tool to express a desired musical result: “it was never, this is what you are after,”⁹⁷ but rather as a point of common interest. Students were never told to listen to a particular recording and to copy the musical intent. In fact, the choice of phrasing and musical taste was, in the end, left to the discretion of the individual.

It should be documented that an essential element in Sedivka’s teaching of phrasing appears to be that of the “life of the note.”⁹⁸ Sedivka believes that every note must have a beginning, middle and end. The length of each component is

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Respondent 6, interviewed by author, 11 March 2001, tape recording.

⁹⁴ Violin lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 27 October 2000, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

⁹⁵ Violin lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 7 April 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

⁹⁶ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

⁹⁷ Respondent 8, interviewed by author, 13 March 2001, tape recording.

dependent upon the rhythmic length of the note, and the relative importance of each component is dependent upon the note's place in the series. The beginning and end of a note should, in Sedivka's mind, be more expressive than the middle. (See Appendix Fourteen for the diagrammatic representation of this concept).

Related to the life of individual notes is Sedivka's philosophy on the physicality of a phrase. In the author's opinion on Sedivka's teaching, the 'releasing' of the middle of individual notes has several vital performance outcomes. Firstly, it allows the listener relief from a constant sound and secondly, it allows the performer physical release from the mechanics of playing the violin, particularly in the left-hand. Sedivka does not subscribe to a 'bulgy turn of phrase,' as the releases are proportionally very small. However, they allow for the vital singing and life-like character of the music to come to the fore.

From the many hours of observation of Sedivka's string pedagogy, bow division emerges as a tool that Sedivka applies consistently in conjunction with the art of phrasing. He often criticises musicians for "using the same amount of bow for similar rhythmic lengths,"⁹⁹ or for using the same weight in the bow throughout a phrase. The reverse notion of bow division is illustrated in Sedivka's statement that "it is no longer just about six down bows and three up bows, one has to imagine it as one bow."¹⁰⁰

Tone production, and the sound of a Sedivka student, are issues that also appear to have evolved throughout his teaching career. Sedivka, as a performer, was described as having a "highly expressive, but soft sound."¹⁰¹ Other descriptions include "an intimate, refined tone, perfectly suited to chamber music."¹⁰² Sela Trau, the cellist in both the London International Trio and the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music Trio was remembered in the same light, and in fact was

⁹⁸ Violin lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 10 April 2001, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

described as having an even more intimate sound than Sedivka himself. A former associate of Sedivka's remarked that "Sela was a small player, she did not make a lot of sound, so [Sedivka] could not make a lot of sound."¹⁰³ Many of the interviewees, commented on how they could easily aurally identify Sedivka's playing: one student even stated that this was because Sedivka had the "easiest technique in the world."¹⁰⁴ Another student commented that it was the "particularly romantic"¹⁰⁵ element of Sedivka's tone that was characteristic.

Unlike Sedivka's own sound, the respondents, in general, did not believe that his students could be aurally identified through a uniformity of sound. However, it was thought that "in the early days, students were sometimes criticised for being too soft."¹⁰⁶ Another student commented that if there was a characteristic sound it was that they "produce a sound that is on the small side, it is very refined, controlled and certainly not brash or aggressive."¹⁰⁷ Other students believed that it was possible to aurally identify a Sedivka student by the cleanness of action and the organisation of the fingers of the left-hand.¹⁰⁸

The expressive and highly individual sound of Sedivka himself seems to have been transmitted to his students, who also exhibit an expressive and individual sound. One interviewee commented that a Sedivka student could be recognised in terms of "phrasing shape and interpretations,"¹⁰⁹ rather than tone colour. In general, it was agreed that the fact that one could not identify a Sedivka student by a uniformity of sound was because "he does not put his stamp on his students."¹¹⁰ Another student commented that "he has never taught only one way of playing, and that is part of the bigness of him as a man, and as a teacher."¹¹¹

¹⁰² Respondent 12, interviewed by author, 11 June 2001, tape recording.

¹⁰³ Respondent 6, interviewed by author, 11 March 2001, tape recording.

¹⁰⁴ Respondent 3, interviewed by author, 23 February 2001, tape recording.

¹⁰⁵ Respondent 11, interviewed by author, 11 April 2001, tape recording.

¹⁰⁶ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

¹⁰⁹ Respondent 13, interviewed by author, 11 June 2001, tape recording.

¹⁰⁸ Respondent 3, interviewed by author, 23 February 2001, tape recording.

¹⁰⁹ Respondent 6, interviewed by author, 11 March 2001, tape recording.

¹¹⁰ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording

It appears that the way Sedivka as a player and teacher creates and alters the 'expressive tone' is through the use of the left-hand and, to a lesser degree, through the use of the bow. A former student commented that "there is a thing in his own technique which translates as a slight gap in his teaching that when it comes to the bow, speed for him is more of a factor in his playing than pressure."¹¹²

Style was one of the few 'key areas' for which criticism has been levelled at Sedivka's teaching. In the previous discussion on vibrato, it was mentioned that Sedivka did not prescribe to historical considerations alone. It is true that concurring with the views of Auer, as detailed in Chapter Three, Sedivka does not consider historical performance practice in depth. A former student commented that "in Mozart [Sedivka] would head more romantically, than a romantic piece heading more classically,"¹¹³ intimating that stylistic considerations were not of paramount importance in Sedivka's teaching or performance of Mozart. Auer's view on style, documented in the quote below, could be said to mirror the opinion of Sedivka:

My own belief is that too great a preoccupation with style as such tends to hamper its fullest and freest expression in the individual player. Do not think of style, think of expressing the soul of music in the most moving and appealing way, with the richest variety of nuance, with the greatest sincerity – and you have your style.¹¹⁴

The revival of early music performance practice was reignited in Europe in the 1970s, when Sedivka was in Australia desperately working to improve the general level of violin playing. Therefore, his experience of the performance of early music was from an older generation. One student who had a long association with Sedivka stated that

¹¹¹ Respondent 1, interviewed by author, 12 February 2001, tape recording.

¹¹² Respondent 3, interviewed by author, 23 February 2001, tape recording.

¹¹³ Respondent 11, interviewed by author, 11 April 2001, tape recording.

¹¹⁴ Leopold Auer, *Violin Playing as I Teach It* (New York: Dover Publications, 1921), 82.

[Sedivka] did not really give a damn about worshipping the composer's intention and Sedivka held the belief that the piece of music is out there and it has a life of its own. This life depends on the performance and in this way he was not particularly interested in the authentic performance of baroque music.¹¹⁵

Another student with a similarly long association, said of Sedivka that

He takes a rather patronising view of early music techniques.¹¹⁶

It must be added, however, that it appears that Sedivka is most accepting of historical practice when it is represented by a tasteful and well-executed performance. His disdain could be directed at the belief that historically informed practice is the only way to perform early music. For Sedivka, this notion becomes a limiting factor and deviates from the tenet that 'nothing is absolute.'

4.3.3 Practice/work ethic/ motivation

As detailed in Chapter Three, Galamian's view on the necessary student work ethic was documented in the quote below:

The road to violin mastery is long and arduous, and great application and perseverance are needed to reach the goal. Talent helps ease the way, but in itself cannot be a substitute for the hard work of practicing.¹¹⁷

It could be contended that Sedivka's notion of the work ethic varies from this traditional view. Sedivka was trained in the traditional expectation of six hours practice a day, and that the only way to achieve mastery was through "hard

¹¹⁵ Respondent 9, interviewed by author, 5 April 2001, tape recording.

¹¹⁶ Respondent 12, interviewed by author, 11 June 2001, tape recording.

¹¹⁷ Galamian, 93.

slog.”¹¹⁸ In Sedivka’s view this ‘hard slog’ was often brainless, and copious amounts of time were wasted.¹¹⁹

It appears that Sedivka discovered, through the journey of his career, that improvement often requires a cognitive paradigm shift, not merely countless repetitions of the same physical and mental action. A former pupil stated that, in this way, the most useful approach of Sedivka’s was that he did not promote repetition, but instead taught one to “look for what the problem is and, by understanding and analysing it, you would find the solution.”¹²⁰ This discovery was probably made through the years of application of his inquiring mind. However, Sedivka has also stated that students in Australia at the end of the twentieth century would not and will not engage in the ‘brainless-hard-slog.’ Therefore, he needed to come up with new solutions and approaches to suit his “Aussie kids.”¹²¹ One former student stated that Sedivka “knew that I was not going to practice that hard, so we had to find a different way to do it.”¹²²

With regard to practice, Sedivka understands the tendency of the mind to wander. Instead of chastising his students for this, he recognises and develops positive strategies to cope with the phenomenon, as indicated in the following passage:

Imagine you were travelling down a road in a horse and buggy. In order to reach your destination you have to keep the horse on track, not allowing it to veer to the left or right. It is not a matter of the horse changing direction because it won’t, unaided, that is. It is merely a matter of keeping it away from the sides of the road. The fact that a horse can change direction and end up in a different destination is to be celebrated. If the horse were an automatic pilot it would be highly skilled at landing a plane but ‘stupid,’ at everything else. Practice is like keeping the horse on the road. The mind is

¹¹⁸ Violin lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 7 April 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Respondent 8, interviewed by author, 13 March 2001, tape recording.

¹²¹ Violin Class, 8 March 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

¹²² Respondent 11, interviewed by author, 11 April 2001, tape recording.

infinitely more capable than having one thought only; this is imperative to be an intelligent and creative being. The mind, however, must constantly be kept from wandering away from the task at hand. We must not condemn ourselves for having a creative mind; instead we must celebrate the fact, and keep it on track.¹²³

Sedivka often comments that when you really focus in practice, one minute feels like an eternity and this fact is to be celebrated. If you look at the clock and are amazed that only a small amount of time has passed, you should be proud because you have really been practising. As young students of Ševčík, Sedivka and his colleagues were required to do six hours practice a day.¹²⁴ Sedivka would often tell his students that Ševčík would say “if it does not feel like hours, you have not been concentrating.”¹²⁵

On practice, Sedivka believes that the ‘hard time’ or the ‘working out’ is the ‘good stuff.’ For example, the more resistance your mind encounters with a new idea the more energy you need to muster and eventually the journey becomes easier. Sedivka speaks of practice, that in a single session one will play something five times and on the fifth repetition you will get it right. The next day you will not immediately remember, however, it may only take four times to remember. To this, Sedivka highlights that it is the recall and the memory of how to do something correctly that is vitally important and states that “we have to make sure the recall is adequate.”¹²⁶

Like Galamian, Sedivka makes clear the delineation between performing (playing) and practicing. All of the descriptions recorded in Chapter Four represent the formulation of many of Sedivka’s notions of developing violinistic technique and musicianship. A significant part of this process must involve changing habits and developing new mental and physical commands. Sedivka states that “you have to

¹²³ Violin Class, 8 March 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

¹²⁴ Jan Sedivka, conversation with author, 3 May 1999.

¹²⁵ Violin Class, 8 March 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

¹²⁶ Violin Class, 30 August 1999, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

remind yourself of the new technique, during all of your practice time, but not during all of your playing, as that would be unrealistic.”¹²⁷

Sedivka motivated and inspired his students in many ways; in fact it appears that he would use whatever means possible for each individual. For some students it was his total dedication to them, to the Conservatorium and to the violin that served as motivation.¹²⁸ Sedivka’s activity as a performer provided much inspiration: he was active as a soloist, performing concertos with the ABC orchestras; as a recitalist with his wife Beryl; as a chamber musician with the Tasmanian Conservatorium Trio; and as the musical director/conductor of the University Orchestra and String Ensembles.

One former associate stated that ‘motivate’ was not really the correct word for Sedivka, instead the student stated

I think Sedivka used every bit of ammunition that he could get, motivate in that way is kind of the wrong word, because it suggests that he excited the students only by inspiration to do better. In actual fact, there is a painful side to him which is that he uses bullying as a very specific teaching tactic and it is hard to call that motivation.¹²⁹

Another former student commented that

[Sedivka] has a tremendous ability to go to the core of a problem, which one can instinctively realise and agree with, which means one is motivated to listen.¹³⁰

It could also be said that Sedivka “places the responsibility of one’s performance on oneself, which serves as a motivating factor.”¹³¹ The same student commented of Sedivka that

¹²⁷ Violin lesson, Jan Sedivka, 6 August, 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

¹²⁸ Respondent 1, interviewed by author, 12 February 2001, tape recording.

¹²⁹ Respondent 3, interviewed by author, 23 February 2001, tape recording.

¹³⁰ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

¹³¹ Respondent 12, interviewed by author, 11 June 2001, tape recording.

He would usually try to get at the heart of the matter, the psychological heart of the problem, that in a way was sometimes cathartic for the student. Other times it was not so successful, and it would be embarrassing; possibly in some cases, damaging, and I think that my impression was that he would do this as a sort of calculated risk that sometimes paid off and sometimes did not.¹³²

In an effort to try and get to the heart of the matter, Sedivka would often manipulate, provoke and guile students to obtain the desired technical or musical result. In most cases this technique was successful in obtaining the desired result. However, for some students, the student could be pushed too far in the opposite direction.¹³³ Some expressions that Sedivka used to induce an emotional response from his students include

- You deserve no compassion
- Just play the violin my goodness, just play the notes
- Why do I have to bully you? Suddenly you remind yourself of what you already know
- One has to learn to not be stupid
- For a reasonably intelligent violinist you don't play very well
- One has to realise it is easier to do it well
- You can play the violin after a fashion
- It is easy to play well, difficult to play badly
- You are not Perlman, but neither am I
- I should say I have no problems with you, but by Jove you have problems with yourself¹³⁴
- You may be a potentially good student but you are not exactly a good teacher because you don't insist on applying it¹³⁵
- Shh! Someone has to think in the building!

It appears that 'in the early days,' the technique of 'poking fun,' was a game in which the rules were more strictly adhered to by Sedivka. In later years he would explain that the reason for the invocation was to induce change, and to show the

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Respondent 6, interviewed by author, 11 March 2001, tape recording.

¹³⁴ *Man of Strings: A Portrait of Jan Sedivka*, dir. Gary Kildea, 56min., Film Australia and Ronin Films, 1999, video cassette.

student that “learning is meant to be fun” and “is not always as serious as it appears.”¹³⁶ It has also become evident that through the years as Sedivka has become older, he has “mellowed” and the type of approach described above “faded away in recent years.”¹³⁷

4.3.4 Performance anxiety

The Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, during the time of leadership by Jan Sedivka, appeared to exhibit an ethos with regard to performing, that ‘nothing is absolute.’ Sedivka does not believe that any performance is completely representative of a student’s ability, instead he believes it is representative of one particular occasion only. Mentioned in Chapter Two was Sedivka’s involvement in the AMEB. As the federal chairman of this organisation, he was successful in passing the motion that the awarding of a numerical mark to a student should be abolished.¹³⁸ With regard to this, apparently Sedivka would ask, “what is a mark a mark of?”¹³⁹ This demonstrates Sedivka’s view that no performance is entirely representative of a student’s potential. Therefore, Sedivka encourages students to perform as often as possible, “as it is through performing that one learns how to perform.”¹⁴⁰ Sedivka does not miss or ignore problems, nor does he deny mistakes in his student’s performances. However he is accepting of them, and often commented that “I have made many more mistakes than you ever will.”¹⁴¹

Through the act of performing frequently and the acceptance of all outcomes, Sedivka addresses the ‘key area’ of performance anxiety. In addition, when asked how not to think ineffectual thoughts when performing, or how to overcome nerves, Sedivka would respond by stating “don’t try to not think about being

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Violin lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 27 October 2000, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

¹³⁷ Respondent 6, interviewed by author, 11 March 2001, tape recording.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Violin lesson, Jan Sedivka and Marina Phillips, 10 June 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

¹⁴¹ Violin Class, 23 March 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

nervous, or worry that you are not good enough, just think about the music and what you are doing.”¹⁴² From the research it appears that Sedivka would play-down performance anxiety. A former student stated that Sedivka’s notion of performance anxiety was that “if one focused on it then one is focusing on the very negative thing that one is trying to get rid of.”¹⁴³

4.3.4 Repertoire

There are two key matters to address, with regard to repertoire, and the teachings of Sedivka; firstly, the choice of specific repertoire and secondly, the subsequent ordering of this repertoire. As a performer Sedivka “has a fantastic knowledge of the repertoire” and, in addition to his knowledge of the traditional repertoire, he “has performed many less familiar works.”¹⁴⁴ Sedivka has always been an advocate of new repertoire, delighting in the world of the pioneer exploring uncharted waters; he is “a keen advocate of trying out new things.”¹⁴⁵

In this vein, Sedivka, as an individual performer and as a teacher, has been responsible for the commissioning of many new Australian works. These works were composed both for himself and also for the student chamber ensemble, the Petra String Quartet.¹⁴⁶ The Petra quartet was formed of post-graduate string students, at the instigation of Sedivka, and was resident at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music from 1973-1985. A considerable amount of the repertoire performed by the group was contemporary Australian.¹⁴⁷

As a performer Sedivka’s repertoire was wide and varied. However, some works were noted by the interviewees, as being particularly special to him. The Janáček violin sonata, for example, was described by a number of respondents as

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Respondent 5, interviewed by author, 6 March 2001, tape recording.

¹⁴⁴ Respondent 1, interviewed by author, 12 February 2001, tape recording.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ As commented upon by most of the interviewees.

¹⁴⁷ Respondent 9, interviewed by author, 5 April 2001, tape recording.

“Sedivka’s piece.”¹⁴⁸ In addition, the Beethoven and Mozart violin sonatas, the Dvořák sonatina, the Brahms G major sonata, and the Elgar violin sonata were highlighted as works of particular importance to Sedivka. A former colleague of Sedivka stated that the repertoire that appeared to be central to Sedivka was “Brahms, Brahms and Brahms, Mozart, Mozart and Mozart, and Beethoven, Beethoven and Beethoven.”¹⁴⁹ It is interesting to note that when interviewed by Louise Oxley, Sedivka stated, with regard to Czech music, “oh well, once again that comes from my childhood, it’s the earth, it’s where I come from of course...but I can’t say it’s the only thing I like. Give me the late Beethoven Quartets, or give me Mozart or Bach.”¹⁵⁰

Various students also mentioned the major concertos in addition to the works of Bach, Bartók, Brahms, Enescu, Hindemith, Honegger, Janáček and Paganini as being central to Sedivka’s teaching. Notably, Sedivka’s choice of repertoire for his students “did not follow an established plan,”¹⁵¹ nor was he dogmatic. Once again in Sedivka’s teaching, the individual’s interests influenced the process; he would guide student’s decisions but was not prescriptive about the details. A former pupil commented that “he suggested repertoire because he thought you would like to play it, but never, it seemed, because you needed it.”¹⁵² Nevertheless, as another student commented, “I suppose in the end everything was covered.”¹⁵³

4.4 Pedagogical process

In the discussion at the beginning of this chapter, relating to the third pedagogical tenet, it was proposed that Sedivka was generally more interested in the individual in the teaching situation, than in the teaching. As was stated by a former student, Sedivka was “almost more interested in the people than the teaching. Not that he didn’t teach well, but he found the endless variation of people at least as

¹⁴⁸ Former Sedivka student, conversation with author, 29 July 2001.

¹⁴⁹ Respondent 6, interviewed by author, 11 March 2001, tape recording.

¹⁵⁰ Louise Oxley, “Interview: Jan Sedivka,” *Siglo* 6 (May 1996): 50-52.

¹⁵¹ Respondent 8, interviewed by author, 13 March 2001, tape recording.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

interesting as what he had to teach them.”¹⁵⁴ It could be said that Sedivka is intrigued by the relationship between acquiring and applying information and that his teaching revolves around the axis of teaching students this process. In Sedivka’s teaching, the individual is elevated to the height, in other pedagogical processes, of the method.

Throughout the documentation in this chapter it is evident that without the individual, Sedivka would not have a teaching process. The student provides Sedivka with a process. He does not follow an identifiable method, but rather progresses, following the dictates of the student’s development, rather than a preconceived teacher-inspired mould. It could be said that Sedivka teaches in a way that is appropriate to the needs of the individual and the situation. As one student stated, “the genius of the Sedivka approach to pedagogy is its relevance to the individual.”¹⁵⁵ Sedivka’s teaching has been described as being reactive rather than prescriptive, teaching according to what he finds, rather than what he thinks he ought to find. Sedivka’s teaching is unique, as it is centrally about the relationship between him and each one of his students. While Sedivka’s pedagogical style is constant, the manifestations of the approach differ with every context. Indeed, one former student described Sedivka’s approach with the comment that “I think he is about finding how it works for you and I found him very specific to my needs.”¹⁵⁶

While it can be said that Sedivka does not teach within the confines of a particular method, he certainly does have a large-scale plan (or scheme, as might be more appropriate¹⁵⁷) for the development of each student. The scheme is a broad-based idea of each individual student’s technical, musical, professional and sometimes life, pathway. However, he does not prescribe a specific pathway of development and refuse to deviate. The fact that Sedivka teaches according to each individual,

¹⁵⁴ Respondent 5, interviewed by author, 6 March 2001, tape recording.

¹⁵⁵ Stemler, 20.

¹⁵⁶ Respondent 11, interviewed by author, 11 April 2001, tape recording.

¹⁵⁷ Many of the interviewees commented on Sedivka’s characteristic scheming, manipulating and plotting.

and his or her specific problems and characteristics, gives great diversity to Sedivka's teaching style and therefore great diversity to his teaching product. One interviewee commented on Sedivka's approach that

It is a considered individual approach, in that he very much matches the problems individuals have, to what they are and how they are, not only physically but also, I believe, their character make-up. He has got very good insights into this, what will push a person, what will help a person and what won't.¹⁵⁸

Chapter One set forth the proposition that "Jan Sedivka is a master of language and has the ability to present information in many ways. Thus his use of language and its context have a remarkable impact on his teaching." Throughout the investigation it became apparent that Sedivka's primary mode of communicating meaning is through his skilful use of the English language. An ex-pupil commented that "his command of English is extraordinary, and his style is very unusual; the ideas tumble out terribly fast in an unstructured way."¹⁵⁹

Sedivka's teaching relies heavily on language: the use of the metaphor, the conundrum, the oxymoron, the contradiction, the lateralism and the analogy are all common techniques of Sedivka. In addition, a plethora of 'stories,' 'anecdotes' and 'phrases' wait at the tip of his tongue for an appropriate juncture. Sedivka uses language in several ways, firstly, he uses the language techniques outlined above to create visual images that have common associations, for example 'dogs' legs' or 'leaving for the bus on time.' These images provide the student with a simplified visual image of the information being transmitted, thereby increasing its ease of comprehension.

Sedivka's use of the conundrum, the oxymoron and the 'lateralism,' for example, 'up is down', 'left is right,' is to invite the student to actively engage in his thought process. In this way the student is not handed the information on a platter, but

¹⁵⁸ Respondent 5, interviewed by author, 6 March 2001, tape recording.

¹⁵⁹ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

must strive consciously to comprehend the subject matter before it can be applied, again enhancing retention.

Language is also used by Sedivka to evoke an emotional response in the student. For example, a statement such as “one has to learn not to be stupid” will be remembered, as will the contents of the lesson, because of the provocation of a strong emotional reaction. On this element of Sedivka’s teaching, one student commented that “it was exasperating, and therefore one did not go away and forget about it.”¹⁶⁰

The result of Sedivka’s use of the various techniques of language was to induce physiological and/or psychological change. Physical changes could include finger organisation, arm-positioning, or preparing for a position change earlier, and the whole gamut of procedures out-lined in this chapter. Psychological changes included conceptualising a new hand position in the mind, hearing the new note in a position change in the head, and many other examples. In some instances Sedivka prompted the physiological and/or psychological change with a change in focus. For example, a student may have been struggling with a particular passage of semiquavers, a problem that was entirely based on the organisation of the left-hand. Sedivka might ask the player to “feel the bow on the string,”¹⁶¹ and the problem will be fixed. The change has not been magically induced, the focus has simply been shifted, by allowing the student to think about something that he or she can already do.

One former student stated that Sedivka would “weave and spin”¹⁶² language around a concept. He would do this to present the idea in many guises with the hope that one, or some of the presentations, will enable the student to conceptualise his thoughts. The author surmises also that Sedivka loves to baffle the listener with his thoughts, and the use of detailed language structures enables

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Violin Class, 26 April 1998, Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania.

¹⁶² Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

him to do so. Another former student stated that Sedivka “explores language and finds millions of different ways of saying the same thing using different language.”¹⁶³

In addition to his use of language, Sedivka communicates musical meaning to his students with other approaches. He demonstrates extensively, providing students with both aural and visual images of his playing. Sedivka also physically manipulates a student’s posture, ensuring that he or she is confronted with a ‘new’ muscle memory of the desired action.

4.5 Conclusions

After investigating the philosophy, the content and the process of Sedivka’s pedagogy it is necessary to identify the effect that this system has on the individual. Central to pedagogy of Sedivka is the necessity of the student to be actively involved in the thinking process. Often, Sedivka provides the student with ‘half of the information’ and understanding can therefore only be found through engagement and thought on the students part. A former student, John Stinson, stated that Sedivka provided “the inspiration to ask the most important and fundamental questions.”¹⁶⁴ Coupled with this inspiration is the fact that Sedivka teaches the understanding of the process of finding the most appropriate answers for each situation and consequently “teaches his students to teach themselves.”¹⁶⁵

Sedivka teaches his students to be their own teacher and does not insist upon a constant attachment to his ideas. In fact, Sedivka enjoys specific situations when a student chooses to differ from his suggestions. This is not to say that he will endure ‘lesser’ technique or musicianship. However, he enjoys a student reaching the level where their convictions are strong enough to challenge his own.

¹⁶³ Respondent 3, interviewed by author, 23 February 2001, tape recording.

¹⁶⁴ John Stinson, “Sedivka in the 60s – A Reflection,” *Stringendo* 19, no. 2 (1998): 37.

¹⁶⁵ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

There are two other areas of Sedivka's pedagogical approach that will be briefly mentioned here. However, the areas are too large to investigate in significant detail. The areas are related and the first is concerned with Sedivka's elevation of the individual in the learning process and how this sometimes leads to the broadening of the boundaries of the teacher-student relationship. A former student and an observer of Sedivka's teaching stated that his unique ability was

To diagnose and remedy reasons why people could not do certain aspects of technique. This inability was often not a physical disability but an inability to bridge the gap between intention and realisation. This was often of a very personal psychological nature and inevitably led to deeper probing of these problems and deeper relationships than one would often find in the teacher-student equation.¹⁶⁶

Another former student commented that

[Sedivka] has done his best to help people in their lives. In a sense, nothing to do with violin playing, except violin playing has something to do with all aspects of life.¹⁶⁷

The second area, as has been alluded to in this exegesis, is Sedivka's interest in psychology, philosophy, eastern philosophies and the writings of Gurdjieff,¹⁶⁸ to mention a few influences. It should be acknowledged that Sedivka's interest in these philosophical areas has invariably influenced his teachings. A former student stated that "there was a philosophical influence, that was huge."¹⁶⁹ Another interviewee commented that "it was just a very interesting approach, for example his phrases such as 'playing badly is difficult, playing well is easy,' could well have been inspired by eastern philosophies."¹⁷⁰ An area for further research would

¹⁶⁶ Respondent 12, interviewed by author, 11 June 2001, tape recording.

¹⁶⁷ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

¹⁶⁸ Larry Sitsky's second violin concerto, written for Jan Sedivka, is entitled Gurdjieff: Concerto No 2.

¹⁶⁹ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

¹⁷⁰ Respondent 5, interviewed by author, 6 March 2001, tape recording.

be the investigation of how this influence has manifested itself into the pedagogical content and style of Sedivka.

Linked with the philosophical inclinations is a ‘quasi-spiritual’ aspect of Sedivka’s teaching, as mentioned by several of the interviewees. When stumped for a solution to a problem Sedivka will retreat and say: “I will just ask my angel.”¹⁷¹ One interviewee stated that “there is an almost miraculous thing there and you know when he is hitting onto something because he says, ‘hang on I am almost there.’”¹⁷² Another former pupil concluded that he thought Sedivka had been so successful as a teacher because of the combination of “intelligence, depth of culture and spiritual depth...he brings to music teaching a combination of a high degree of intelligence, a richness of middle European culture and the inside of someone who is living on a spiritual dimension.”¹⁷³

To conclude, the quote below gives an interesting summary of the pedagogy of Sedivka:

In some ways these phrases [up is down, in is out] convey the essence of Jan’s style and reveal, with a feather light touch, some philosophical inclinations, which lie at the core of his teaching. Though he refuses to be limited by specifics in conversation or seminar situations, he can be very specific when dealing with technical matters. He never tires of rubbishing sacred cows and dogma and is adamant in his refusal to find absolute solutions – the enquiry must be open-ended. He constantly seeks everyday analogies to enlighten and enliven, and turns over-used thought-patterns upside down and inside out in order to provoke reflection. The large structures, the psychological or physiological prime movers are at the root of his thinking. Seeking to see through facades and incidentals to fundamentals, he uses mimicry and story telling in all gradations, from brash to subtle, in his teacher’s box of tricks. For reasons like these, he can

¹⁷¹ Respondent 6, interviewed by author, 11 March 2001, tape recording.

¹⁷² Respondent 13, interviewed by author, 11 June 2001, tape recording.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

bring apparently sterile compositions to colourful life,
or an inhibited performer towards unsuspected insights
of musical statement and comment.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ Lyndal Edmiston and Leon Stemler, *Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, Beginning the Journey, the first 25 years* (Hobart: University of Tasmania, 1990), 11-12.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In this examination of Sedivka's contribution to Australian string pedagogy and performance, definite trends and characteristics have become apparent. The scope of Sedivka's influence has been vast, as he has made significant contributions to many areas of the Australian music community. Sedivka has influenced individual performers and teachers, tertiary institutions, other organisations such as: the Tasmanian String Summer School; the AUSTA; the AMEB; a large body of Australian composers, in addition to an incalculable number of people in the broader Australian community, as audience members.

Sedivka's effect in Australia has been immense and, through this investigation it has come to light, that perhaps the biggest contribution has been his profound influence on individual players. One former student stated that Sedivka's "students are his most significant contribution to the Australian music industry; he has taught a lot of students who have themselves inspired a lot of students."¹ A very high percentage of the students and colleagues interviewed shared the opinion that Sedivka's input had caused a fundamental change to their playing, and had had a significant impact on their careers and lives. Other respondents comments include "he has influenced everything about my life in the music industry;"² "I would not be in the music industry if it were not for him,"³ "Jan fixed my technique;"⁴ and "Jan Sedivka made me as a musician, without him – I would not be where I am today."⁵

Obviously the experience of every student is unique. However, on a musical and technical level, several characteristics appear to set Jan Sedivka's pedagogy apart from other teachers. These characteristics are that:

¹ Respondent 12, interviewed by author, 11 June 2001, tape recording.

² Ibid.

³ Respondent 8, interviewed by author, 13 March 2001, tape recording.

⁴ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

⁵ Respondent 13, interviewed by author, 11 June 2001, tape recording.

- Sedivka has the ability to understand and contribute to the holistic development of an individual, while responding to musical and technical details
- Sedivka does not teach according to ‘absolute values’
- Sedivka has a demonstrated ability to affect and to fundamentally alter the cognitive and psychomotor behaviour of musicians, specifically string players
- Sedivka has a demonstrated ability to teach students to induce this cognitive and psychomotor change within themselves and in others, thereby ensuring and perpetuating the learning cycle

These pedagogical characteristics relate to the propositions detailed in Chapter One. The first proposition that “Jan Sedivka has made a significant contribution to Australian string pedagogy and performance, particularly with regard to his legacy of students who have become leading educators,” can be linked to the characteristics above. Sedivka has produced many string students who have become significant educators. In 2001 there was a former student of Sedivka’s teaching in a tertiary institution in almost every state of Australia (as detailed in Appendix Fifteen). An ex-pupil commented that “the influence of his students at all levels of music performance and education is certainly powerful.”⁶ Christian Wojtowicz, a leading Australian cellist and pedagogue, stated that an interesting aspect of Sedivka’s teaching was that

Most of his students become teachers as well as players and the best teachers who have been students of his, are the best teachers anywhere, at different levels. And they are absolutely everywhere...there is not one major institution in the country that does not have someone on their staff who was a student of his, through violin, viola and cello.⁷

Sedivka’s pedagogy challenges students to ask the fundamental questions in the learning situation. This challenge has ramifications on the ‘type of student’ that Sedivka has been able to produce. The ability that Sedivka possesses to teach a

⁶ Ibid.

student to teach himself appears to have created a generation of musicians who not only can perform at a high level, but who can also communicate this art to others. Sedivka teaches his charges to “sniff out a problem,”⁸ to “ask the fundamental questions,”⁹ and how then to find the most appropriate physiological solution. A former student stated that “with Sedivka it was up to you to get from A to B, but he would help you get there, however, he would not do it for you or lead you by the hand.”¹⁰ Another Sedivka student, Anna Maria Dell’Oso, stated that if “you studied from him you would learn about the secrets of learning itself.”¹¹

The paradigm that Sedivka employs, elevating the individual in the learning process, has other ramifications upon the ‘type of student’ that he has produced. Sedivka “sees what your individual potential is and works to bring it out of you.”¹² Another student commented of Sedivka’s teaching that “the greatness of his teaching is that he makes it possible for you, the student, to go off and be who one is.”¹³ In this way, Sedivka has been able to produce students with many individual attributes. Along with producing fine educators, Sedivka has taught violinists who have had soloist qualities. Beryl Kimber,¹⁴ an eminent Australian violinist and teacher stated that

Jan Sedivka has proved himself to be a very great teacher, one of Australia’s finest. Rhetoric is no good, it is the results that count. I can remember one year when he had four finalists in the ABC concerto

⁷ *Man of Strings: A Portrait of Jan Sedivka*, dir. Gary Kildea, 56min., Film Australia and Ronin Films, 1999, video cassette.

⁸ Former Sedivka student, conversation with author, 19 October 2001.

⁹ Respondent 12, interviewed by author, 11 June 2001, tape recording.

¹⁰ Respondent 9, interviewed by author, 5 April 2001, tape recording.

¹¹ Shirley Apthorp, “Maestro’s popularity upset Queensland,” *The Bulletin* (18 June 1993): 111.

¹² Respondent 8, interviewed by author, 13 March 2001, tape recording.

¹³ Respondent 3, interviewed by author, 23 February 2001, tape recording.

¹⁴ *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music* stated that Kimber studied at the Royal Academy of Music, London, with Georges Enesco in Paris and with David Oistrakh in Russia. She won the ABC Instrumental and Vocal Competition and won First Distinction at the 1958 Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow.

competition.¹⁵ His results have been the most outstanding forty, thirty and twenty years ago.¹⁶

Sedivka has also produced many students who are fine orchestral players. In 2001, every Australian symphony orchestra has a player who has studied at some stage with Sedivka (see Appendix Sixteen). This is of particular interest, because, although Sedivka's own performance career embodied many facets: he was a concerto soloist; a recitalist; a chamber musician; a diplomat and a teacher; he was not, however, an orchestral musician. In fact, one of the criticisms of Sedivka, raised in the series of interviews, was the failure of the pedagogy to prepare students for orchestral life. As a former student related Sedivka "had an outside view of orchestral technique, with not much experience of it."¹⁷

It is interesting to again consider the fact that Sedivka had the ability to seek out the potential of each individual. A further ramification of this ability is that Sedivka can transform 'less-gifted' students into accomplished violinists. A former student stated that

[Sedivka] is a genius with less talented students. No-one else can teach less talented students to the peak of their ability, in the way that Sedivka can. Because he exercises a compassion for the person that is in front of him, who is a student, whether they are talented or what their potential is. In the moment of teaching that does not matter.¹⁸

Another proposition outlined in Chapter One was that "Jan Sedivka has made a significant contribution to Australian string pedagogy and performance, particularly with regard to the development of left-hand technique." The extensive views that Sedivka holds on the technique of the left-hand were documented in Chapter Four. Every respondent commented, to some degree, upon Sedivka's

¹⁵ In 1986, the four students from the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music who were in the finals of the ABC Young Performers' Competition were Alison Lazaroff (Violin), Dale Brown (Cello), Hua Fei (Violin) and Rosalin Lazaroff (Violin).

¹⁶ Beryl Kimber, phone conversation with author, 18 June 2001.

¹⁷ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

“revelatory” concepts of the left-hand, and the relationship between the legs of a quadruped and the four fingers of the left-hand. This element of his teaching appeared to be the most detailed at the close of the twentieth century.

It was stated in Chapter Four that Sedivka’s mode of teaching gives emphasis to the needs of the individual student. From this it can be surmised that the emphasis on left-hand technique, at the end of the twentieth century, reveals Sedivka’s determination to address a general weakness in his students of the time. From the investigation it became apparent that at the outset of Sedivka’s teaching in Australia his “evangelical” emphasis was on general posture. This emphasis seems to have slowly shifted to that of left-hand technique in response to student needs, and borne out by his insight. During Sedivka’s early days in Australia he was one of a small number teaching the violin at a high level.

In the words of Sedivka himself “I [now] find it boring to preach about how to hold the violin – so many people can do it so well – when I first arrived I was the only one.”¹⁹ One of Sedivka’s students commented about Sedivka’s teaching style that “now it is less extraordinary because there are so many of his students teaching...and all his students tend to do this to some extent.”²⁰

It could be surmised that the propagation of Sedivka’s emphasis on general posture, by the first generation of his students, has produced a level of player in Australia, for whom this area of technique is generally not problematic. It could also be proposed that the teaching of the current generation of Sedivka students might likewise incorporate a high level of understanding of left-hand technique. An interesting remark was made by a former Sedivka associate who stated that “it is ironic that Jan Sedivka’s success, [through the success of his students] has led to his singularity or his unique place in Australian string pedagogy, being diminished.”²¹

¹⁸ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

¹⁹ Private conversation author and Jan Sedivka, 13 January 2001.

²⁰ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

²¹ Respondent 16, conversation with author, 29 September 2001.

Another proposition stated in Chapter One was that Sedivka made a significant contribution to Australian string pedagogy and performance, with regard to bureaucratic infrastructures for string playing in Australia. In this sense Sedivka's contribution to the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music was the most profound, as the Conservatorium was "his baby for a long time."²² At the Tasmanian Conservatorium, Sedivka created many opportunities for string playing. A former student stated that in one year, at the height of the department, "Lyndall Edmiston had nineteen principal study students, Keith Crellin had twelve viola students and Jan Sedivka, had a whole lot more."²³ Lyndall Edmiston and Leon Stemler stated that "one of the outstanding achievements of Jan's years as Director was the evolution of the University Orchestra through a string orchestral phase into an orchestra of full symphonic proportions."²⁴

Alongside Sedivka's influence at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, was his instigation and directorship of the Tasmanian String Summer Schools. These schools gave students a sample of what they would encounter at the Tasmanian Conservatorium and were an avenue used by Sedivka to "encourage young people to come to the Conservatorium."²⁵ All of the interviewees believed that the schools had a considerable impact on Australian string playing, stating that "they had a profound impact"²⁶ and that the "Tasmanian String Summer School had a huge influence on the Australian string scene, and it was certainly one of the most exciting institutions I have ever had anything to do with."²⁷ A contemporary of Sedivka stated that he felt that the impact of the School was so profound "because of the sheer volume of students who passed through the schools and that many of these [students] are now in important positions throughout the country."²⁸

²² Respondent 9, interviewed by author, 5 April 2001, tape recording.

²³ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

²⁴ Edmiston and Stemler, 9.

²⁵ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

²⁶ Respondent 6, interviewed by author, 11 March 2001, tape recording.

²⁷ Respondent 12, interviewed by author, 11 June 2001, tape recording.

²⁸ Respondent 6, interviewed by author, 11 March 2001, tape recording.

The Tasmanian String Summer School program (TSSS) existed alongside other activities for youth music, such as the National Music Camp and youth orchestral activities, in many states. The TSSS program, however, was unique in that it was the first and one of the only developments in Australian string culture that enabled a national focus for the promotion of one individual's pedagogical philosophy, content and process. It was also unique in that it gave students, amateurs, and professional teachers and performers, experience and expertise at a high level. Remembering back to Chapter Two, in 1975, Leon Stemler stated, with regard to the Tasmanian String Summer School, that Jan Sedivka's notion of fostering a less doctrinaire approach and a more questioning attitude among Australia's new teachers the school may eventually show its greatest impact. In 2001, it could be remarked that Stemler's proposition has 'strongly resounded' throughout the subsequent quarter of a century.

Sedivka's role, both at a national and state level, on the Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB), was substantial. Sedivka was said to have "worked very hard"²⁹ for the AMEB both at a bureaucratic level and also at the grass-roots level, being heavily involved in the examining process for many years. A former student commented that "locally he [Sedivka] was able to open people's eyes to developing more rigorous standards to every grade of the AMEB...he was able to lift the consciousness of the AMEB."³⁰ It was also documented that Sedivka's influence upon the AMEB was strong, as he took the approach of "trying not to be dogmatic...not supporting a kind of institutional dogma."³¹ Lyndall Hendrickson, an esteemed Australian violinist and teacher, stated that Sedivka "has been proactive enough to make teachers aware that they are not as good as they thought they were, and that he has been outstanding in trying to bring a higher standard of training to Australia."³²

²⁹ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

³⁰ Respondent 3, interviewed by author, 23 February 2001, tape recording.

³¹ Respondent 9, interviewed by author, 5 April 2001, tape recording.

³² Lyndall Hendrickson, interviewed by author, 11 March 2001, tape recording.

In addition to Sedivka's role on the Australia Council Music Fund, where he exerted a "small, however, important influence,"³³ Sedivka indirectly contributed to the Australian Strings' Association (AUSTA). This association was founded by one of Sedivka's former students, Elizabeth Morgan, who served for two terms as national president and was pivotal to the success of the group.

The proposition that "many students of Sedivka have unique performing styles and this individuality has been encouraged in his teaching" has been affirmed through the process of this investigation. In many ways it could be said that the ability to allow the student to find his or her unique voice is one of Sedivka's strongest pedagogical areas. A former associate stated that Sedivka has the ability to

empower the student, string players, with a feeling that they can achieve whatever they wish to do in a performance, provided they follow the line of the music; they make the music their own; and they use their body, their arms and fingers and technique in such a way as to realise these things.³⁴

The empowerment mentioned above has often been conveyed through Sedivka's distinctive use of language. The ability to present information in many ways has had a remarkable impact on Sedivka's teaching, as proposed in Chapter One. Outlined in Chapter Four was the fact that language, indeed, formed the primary vehicle for the transmission of Sedivka's pedagogical meaning.

The fourth proposition that "Jan Sedivka's teaching has evolved from the analytical to the descriptive" was stated in Chapter One. Outlined in Chapter Four was the change in Sedivka's teaching, manifest in a change of approach to technical work and technical details. It appears that, at the outset of his career in Australia, Sedivka was insistent upon the technical mechanics of violin playing. Perhaps this is a reflection of the pedagogical influences of Otakar Ševčík and

³³ Jan Sedivka, interviewed by author, 24 November 2001, tape recording.

³⁴ Respondent 6, interviewed by author, 11 March 2001, tape recording.

Max Rostal. Rostal was noted as being “most like his late master [Carl Flesch]”³⁵ and highly analytical in nature. It appears that Sedivka’s teaching evolved from the highly analytical and somewhat prescriptive teaching, akin to Ševčík and Rostal,³⁶ to a more individually based intuitive form of teaching. A former student of Sedivka stated that “I would say he was extremely analytical, I think he might have gotten this from Rostal, but he [Sedivka] was also intuitive – I think the balance has swung over the years; I think he is now more intuitive than analytical.”³⁷ Many of the interviewees commented upon the fact that Sedivka’s teaching evolved and that he mellowed throughout the years. One student said that “as Sedivka got older he became more reflective and became less interested in bullying people into the mechanics of playing the violin.”³⁸ Another observer’s recollection of the change in Sedivka’s teaching was that

Twenty years ago there was nothing but scales, thirds octaves, sixths – we used to have technique classes as well as repertoire classes – so that kind of rigorousness of expectation in training I don’t think he is interested in any more.³⁹

To summarise the evolution of Sedivka’s teaching, it appears that the focus shifted through time from the analytical to the intuitive, and from the training aspect to the revelatory perspective.

The fifth proposition “that Jan Sedivka has established an Australian String School” has been examined as a result of this research. Throughout the last few centuries, many national schools have emerged and experienced times of prominence and favour. After the Second World War, Australian string performance and pedagogy was comprised of an assemblage of influences from

³⁵ Schwarz, 342.

³⁶ It is interesting to note that in many ways the career of Jan Sedivka in Australia reflects that of Max Rostal in England. Rostal was a gifted performer and pedagogue, was responsible for the commissioning of many new works, established the European String Teachers’ Association and received a CBE in 1977.

³⁷ Respondent 4, interviewed by author, 25 February 2001, tape recording.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Respondent 3, interviewed by author, 23 February 2001, tape recording.

many varied national schools. The research of Philip Borer, detailed in Chapter Two, proposed that Australian performance and pedagogy had been primarily influenced by Central European Schools: the Czech, Viennese and Hungarian traditions.

A school of violin playing has traditionally been comprised of a central teacher (player), or a small group of teachers (players), whose technique, style, musicianship, and values represent a commonality. The teachers or players at the helm have traditionally been responsible for the ‘passing-on’ of their style and belief system, to subsequent generations of violinists. Other characteristics of a school of playing are similarities in sound conception and in the physicality of technique.

As documented in Chapter Four, the student body of Sedivka exhibits some of the characteristics of a school. This could be stated particularly of the students from his early years in Australia. For example, the sound of Sedivka’s students was often criticised for being soft and was sometimes identifiable by the cleanliness of the action of the left-hand. In addition, the physicality of the left-hand, in the early days, was often thought to have been visually identifiable. However, the overwhelming attitude regarding Sedivka’s teaching was that he caters to the needs of each and every student, forming a ‘from the inside-out’ approach. Traditional schools of pedagogy tend to exert an ‘outside-in’ approach on each and every student, regardless of their individuality. Sedivka provides each student with the knowledge and understanding of how to reach their ultimate potential.

Only time will tell if Sedivka has created an enduring Australian School. However, in the opinion of the author, Sedivka has produced a great number of individual students with individual characteristics, many of whom have and will continue to influence Australian string performance and pedagogy. The assertion that Sedivka founded a string school would appear to limit the flexible and evolving nature of his teaching. With this in mind, one respondent stated that the fact that Sedivka’s students were not unanimous was not a criticism, but was rather a “sign of the

greatness of the man and teacher.”⁴⁰ A former student commented on the notion of the Sedivka School that “the people talk about the Sedivka School, [Sedivka] would say “I don’t know what that is,” and I think that is quite right too.”⁴¹ Perhaps also it should be proposed that, at the outset of the twenty-first century, in an age of an international community and global systems of information exchange, discrete ‘schools’ with limited outside influences, are possibly no longer possible on the same scale as at the outset of the twentieth century. Another ex-Sedivka pupil stated that

[Sedivka] has never tried to publish a method. Various other teachers have recognised their own teaching as representing one particular method or style, and have produced a book or a volume which they believe to be ‘better than all others,’ I don’t think that Jan has ever tried to follow that path.⁴²

It was repeatedly remarked throughout this investigation that Sedivka was a “great teacher.” However, through time, educators, students and musicians have asked “what are the ingredients of a great teacher?”⁴³ In 1989, an article in *The Bulletin*, addressed this question. The investigator, Charles Boag, citing many prominent educational texts, devised a ranked list of qualities defining a great teacher. These qualities included various abilities: to enthuse students; to treat students as individuals; to know the subject; to be loving and warm; to teach to learn; to empathise with students; to relate to others; to be fair; to be firm and flexible; to be organised, to prepare students for life; to manage the classroom; to have a sense of humour; to be a complete person and to take risks.⁴⁴

This list, while not exhaustive, throws some light on the question of what makes a great teacher. To varying degrees, it could be stated that Sedivka exhibits elements of all these characteristics. The article also comments that some teachers can

⁴⁰ Respondent 1, interviewed by author, 12 February 2001, tape recording.

⁴¹ Respondent 5, interviewed by author, 6 March 2001, tape recording.

⁴² Respondent 1, interviewed by author, 12 February 2001, tape recording.

⁴³ Charles Boag, “What makes a great teacher,” *The Bulletin* (18 July 1989): 46-52.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

“break all the rules and still be great.” The problem, however, is that a list such as this leaves vital qualities, such as elements of the personality, the individual, the individual students’ response and the results of the teaching, out of the ‘great-teacher’ equation.

In this exegesis, the text and reflections of several ‘great’ violin teachers of the twentieth century, Auer, Flesch, and Galamian, have been examined. How can one reliably assess the value and influence of these masters? Their thoughts and beliefs can be examined through their writings, one can read commentaries on their teaching styles. One can also assess their results in influencing generations of new violinists. What cannot be ascertained from these results and writings, however, is the physiological response that could be induced in these teachers’ students. History provides evidence that Leopold Auer was a great teacher. He produced students who are reputed to be some of the greatest violinists ever known, such as Jascha Heifetz, Mischa Elman, Efrem Zimbalist and Nathan Milstein. However, would these performers have become international artists had they not studied with Auer, and does their extraordinary instinctive ability transcend the pedagogical influence?

In general, the major violin treatises do not, and perhaps cannot, deal with issues other than the cognitive understanding of personally formulated beliefs relating to specific technical or musical concepts. The comparison between the written word of a master teacher and the verbal discourse, in the direct interchange of the one-to-one experience of learning, is very difficult to assess and in many ways the two modes of information exchange are too different to make a comparison. However, one pedagogical commentator, espoused of a belief system with parallels to that employed by Sedivka. This belief system denounces the dogmatic following of various schools and methods that are merely manuals of prescriptive instructions. Frederick Neumann in his volume *Violin Left-Hand Technique, A Survey of*

Related Literature,⁴⁵ discusses the difference between what he terms the “mechanistic and “organic” approach to teaching:

There are a few teachers who will not impose the same unyielding patten on every single student forcing him into the Procrustean bed of a rigid method, but who strive instead to develop the student’s inherent abilities by promoting his growth organically. Guided by superior pedagogical instinct and insight these inspired teachers do not need the crutch of a ‘method’; they work...“from the inside outward” in a truly creative, undogmatic, organic teaching approach. There are the few shining exceptions among the vast army of instructors who see as their only mission imparting their ‘method’ to students, invariably by mechanistic routine application of dogmatic rules, by enforcement of ready made movement and position patterns from the “outside inward.”⁴⁶

A former student of Sedivka also makes the distinction that teachers who represent the tradition of a school of violin teaching sometimes deny individual content

So in a way instrumental string pedagogy all over the world is training based according to tradition, method, style and national tendency rather than a course of discovery of how to play an instrument, which of course includes training. The training, is only part of the more universal view of what it is to learn an instrument.⁴⁷

It appears that Sedivka's students largely endorse the view that he is very knowledgeable and experienced in analysing the various traditional schools. Invariably he has incorporated the best of these ideas with his approach to do what is best for each individual violinist. As one former student stated

⁴⁵ Frederick Neumann, *Violin Left-Hand Technique, A Survey of Related Literature* (Urbana: American String Teachers Association, 1969).

⁴⁶ Ibid, 4-5.

⁴⁷ Respondent 1, interviewed by author, 12 February 2001, tape recording.

He recognises that we are all individual people - we have individual physiques, hand shapes and all of the rest of it, and I don't think that Jan claims to be a preacher of one school.⁴⁸

When comparing the pedagogy of Sedivka to that documented in the texts of Auer, Flesch and Galamian, several similarities and fundamental differences come to light. The similarities are that the four teachers are involved with the art of making violin playing easier and better. In this way it could be contended that according to a specific situation Sedivka could be stated to ascribe to any method that produces the desired result for the individual. For example, there are many times where Auer, Flesch and Galamian state that a technical procedure must be carried out in a certain way. Sedivka would not make 'absolute' statements such as these. However, if, according to circumstance (such as individual physique, individual personality, the piece, the phrase, the note or the instrument), the statement was appropriate and produced a favourable result, Sedivka would be in agreement. It could be contended, therefore, that the fact that Sedivka will not or does not assign an absolute context to information provides the biggest difference between his teaching style, and the styles of Auer, Flesch and Galamian. To summarise, it could be said that Sedivka incorporates many of the ideas of the great masters, but that his philosophy does not ascribe to limiting contexts. In this way Sedivka would not document his pedagogical system or 'method' since that would prescribe a defining context, and would be in direct conflict with his philosophy of the ever changing, ever growing journey of learning. A former student stated that

The most impressive thing he [Sedivka] teaches you is to teach yourself, and I think that that is the most precious thing about him. He teaches you that it is only your place in the musical world that matters; not whether you belong to a certain school that is important, or whether you don't belong. In other words, there is nothing bigoted about his pedagogical approach, and generally world wide, I find pedagogical

⁴⁸ Respondent 3, interviewed by author, 23 February 2001, tape recording.

approaches are bigoted. Whether it is nationalistic or guru based or etc.⁴⁹

In conclusion, the research undertaken for this exegesis has revealed that Sedivka's pedagogical style is unique and that he does not subscribe to any prescribed method. He employs student-centred learning responsive to the individual needs and skill base of his students. Through the skilful employment of language techniques, including analogy and conundrum, Sedivka has the ability to fundamentally alter the cognitive and psychomotor behaviour of musicians. Sedivka's direct influence and that mediated through his students has had a profound impact on the development and levels of attainment in string performance and pedagogy in Australia.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

APPENDIX ONE: SELECTED PEDAGOGICAL TEXTS

Publication details are listed in the bibliography.

Applebaum, Samuel. *The Art and Science of String Performance*.

Auer, Leopold. *Violin Playing as I Teach It*.

Dounis, D.C. *The Artist's Technique of Violin Playing Op.12*.

Fischer, Simon. *Basics*.

Flesch, Carl. *The Art of Violin Playing*. 2 Vols.

_____. *Urstudien (Basic Studies)*.

_____. *Violin Fingering: Its Theory and Practice*.

Galamian, Ivan. *The Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching*.

Gerle, Robert. *The Art of Practising the Violin*.

Havas, Kato. *A New Approach to Violin Playing*.

_____. *The Twelve Lesson Course in A New Approach to Violin Playing*.

Jacoby, Robert. *Violin Technique, A Practical Analysis for Performers*.

Menuhin, Yehudi. *Six Lessons with Yehudi Menuhin*.

_____. *Yehudi Menuhin Music Guides Violin and Viola*.

Neumann, Frederick. *Violin Left Hand Technique, A Survey of Related Literature*.

Primrose, William. *Technique is Memory*.

Ricci, Ruggiero. *Left-Hand Violin Technique*.

Sand, Barbara Lourie. *Teaching Genius, Dorothy Delay and the Making of a Musician*.

Szigeti, Joseph. *A Violinists Notebook*.

_____. *Szigeti on the Violin*.

Yampolsky, I. M. *The Principles Of Violin Fingering*.

APPENDIX TWO: KEY AREAS OF MODERN VIOLIN PEDAGOGY

This list of ‘key areas of modern violin pedagogy’ was derived from a review of the pedagogical texts listed in Appendix One.

I TECHNIQUE

A. GENERAL POSTURE

1. Position of the violin
2. Position of the legs
3. Position of the head
4. Chin rest
5. Shoulder rest

B. LEFT HAND/ ARM TECHNIQUE

1. Hand position
2. Thumb position
3. Arm position
4. First finger
5. Second finger
6. Third finger
7. Fourth finger
8. The extension
9. Finger pressure
10. Finger organisation
11. Holding the fingers down
12. Timing
13. Basic movements of the left hand
 - a) Horizontal movement
 - b) Vertical movement
14. Fingering
 - a) Fingering as a technical means

- b) Fingering as a means of expression
- c) Fingering and the tone colours
- 15. Position Changing
 - a) Crawling
 - b) Pivoting
 - c) Portamento/ Glissando
- 16. Double-stops/ Chords
 - a) Thirds
 - b) Fourths
 - c) Fifths
 - d) Sixths
 - e) Sevenths
 - f) Octaves (1-4)
 - g) Tenths
- 17. Vibrato
 - a) Wrist
 - b) Arm
 - c) Finger
- 18. Scales
 - a) How to practice scales
 - b) The drone scale
 - c) Fingering
 - d) Bowings
 - e) Scales in thirds
 - f) Scales in fourths
 - g) Scales in sixths
 - h) Scales in octaves
 - i) Fingered octaves
 - j) Tenths
 - k) Chromatic scales
- 19. Left-hand pizzicato

- 20. Ornaments
 - a) Pizzicato
 - b) Harmonics
 - 1) Natural
 - 2) Artificial
 - 3) Double
- 21. Geminiani grip
- 22. Intonation

C. RIGHT HAND/ ARM TECHNIQUE

- 1. How to hold the bow
- 2. Change of bow
- 3. Bow angle
- 4. Change of string (to the right)
- 5. Change of string (to the left)
- 6. Bow division
- 7. Speed
- 8. Pressure
- 9. Sounding point
- 10. The *Détaché* (Detached stroke)
- 11. The *Martelé* (Hammer stroke)
- 12. The *Staccato* (Up- and down-bow)
- 13. The *Staccato Volant* ("Flying staccato")
- 14. The *Spiccato Sautillé* (Spiccato with bouncing, springing bow)
- 15. The *Ricochet-Saltato* (Rebound with springing bow)
- 16. The *Tremolo*
- 17. The Arpeggio
- 18. The *Legato*
- 19. The *Fouetté*
- 20. Double-stops/ triple-stops/ quadruple-stops

D. TONE PRODUCTION

1. The Search for tone production
2. The point of contact between the bow and string
3. Defects of tone production
4. The tilt of the bow
5. Tone as a means of expression
6. Dynamics
7. Dynamic faults
8. Tonal studies
9. Tonal colours

II MUSICIANSHIP

1. Phrasing
2. Nuance—the soul of interpreting phrasing
3. The soul
4. The life of notes
5. Style

III PRACTICE/ WORK ETHIC

1. How to practise
2. Mental alertness in practice
3. Objectives in practice
 - a) building time
 - b) interpreting time
 - c) performing time
4. The critical ear
5. Practice as a means of learning
6. Musical memory

IV PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

1. Stage fright
2. Influencing stage fright by means of autosuggestion

3. Hindrances due to emotional paralysis
4. Hindrances due to an over-estimation of the technical moment
5. Hindrances resulting from an exaggerated urge for perfection
6. Hindrances due to coercive ideas

V REPERTOIRE

VI TEACHING

APPENDIX THREE: STRING STUDENTS OF JAN SEDIVKA

This list does not claim to be exhaustive, nor does it document the many students who passed through the annual Tasmanian String Summer School (1971-1988). In addition, for many years, continental style of teaching was employed at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, where by the students of one teacher, also had the opportunity to have lessons with another. In this way many of the students listed here would have also been taught by other members of the faculty, namely Lyndal Edmiston, Keith Crellin and Simon Oswell. In fact, some of the students listed here primarily studied with another teacher, however Sedivka would have exerted his influence, through lessons and the weekly performance classes.

Allan, Anthony
Allan, Jonathan
Arkleysmith, Kierstan
Apthorp, Shirley
Ardlie, Jackie
Arthur, Cathy
Baker, Margaret
Baron, Claire
Bester, Robert
Bewick, Grant
Bishop, Kim
Birsak, Rupert
Blades, Margaret
Borer, Philippe
Breen, Andrea
Breen, Sandra
Bremner, Kirsty
Bremner, Rachel
Brockman, Katharine
Brown, Natalie
Bruce, Matthew
Bryce, Pamela
Bushby, Charles
Bussey, John
Bucher, Domenica
Caley, Margaret
Campbell, Joan
Clinch, Judy
Champion, Jenni
Clarke, Anthony
Conoplia, Jan
Connolly, Margaret

Constantinou, Constantine
Coulter, Kerry
Crellin, Keith
Crump, Belinda
Cumming, Doreen
Curro, John
Curro, Sarah
Davidson, Erica
Davies, Helen
De Graaf, Adrian
Delia Stender, Alexandra
Dell'Oso, Anna Maria
Deng, Hue
Drake, Katherine
Durack, James
Egerton, Rodney
Edmiston, Lyndal
Edward, Michael
Evans, Daniel
Exton, Peter
Fairs, Amanda
Fairs, Joanna
Fei, Hua
Ferrier, Isobel
Fenton, Paul
Frettes, Bernard de
Fried, Jane
Fromyhr, Tor
Froomes, Janet
Gleeson, Mary
Heaney, Michael
Hearn, Marjorie

Hempel, Stàs
Hindson, Sarah
Hodgman, Kendal
Holloway, Damien
Huang, Shutì
Hyland, Sonia
Ismail, Mahi
Jacks, Laurence
Jarczewski, Christine
Jinchenko, Svetlana
Jones, Trevor
Johnson, Francesca
Johnston, Michael
Kerr, Rosemary
Kimber, Jennifer
Knight, John
Krajicek, Borivoj
Lane, William
Lawson, Christine
Lazaroff, Alison
Lazaroff, Ivan
Lazaroff, Rosalin
Lazaroff, Susanna
Lazaroff, Theodore
Le Guen, David
Leis, Jennifer
Lensky, Jan
Leyland, Coralie
Loughnan, Celia
Love, Karen
Lovenfosse, Rodney
Macindoe, Robert

Maguire, Christiana
Ma, Jun Yi
Marsh, Louise
Martine, Victoria
Martinez, Anna
McCullouch, Clive
McDonald, Adrian
Mensah, Atta Annan
Miller, Mara
Miller, Simon
Morgan, Elizabeth
Morris, Cathy
Muldoon, Michael
Myers, Christine
Nicholas, Phillip
Nixon, Philip
Norrish, Carolyn
Oswell, Simon
Osman, Michael
Phillips, Marina
Petersen, Andrea
Plooij, Jacob
Pokorny, John
Pooley, Alison
Prideaux, Catherine
Punyanita, Anita
Quan, Shang
Quinn, Celeste
Rayner, Lynette
Rasmus, Patrisha
Reddington, Martin
Roberts, Gwyn

Robins, Gabbi
Rong, Shen
Rose, Helen
Russell, Catriona
Sargeant, Helen
Shaffir, David
Shirley, Anne
Shih, Joan
Short, Beth
Sigrist, Christina
Simpson, Graham
Smith, Delia
Smith, Kerry
Solomon, Roger
Stather, Michael
Stinson, John
Somers, Rebecca
Svilans, Tereze
Sykes, Anne-Marie
Tang, Bao Di
Tanner, Carolyn
Tedds, Gail
Templeton, Robert
Terry, Kate
Thé, Francis
Thompson, David
Thompson, Heather
Thompson, Stephanie
Thomson, Pauline
Travers, Helen
Ughi, Uto
Vincent, Didi

Wahl, Daniel
Watkin, Cindy
Willder, Julie
Wong, Ka
Wojtowicz, Anna
Wojtowicz, Christian
Wright, Richard
Wu, Stephen
Wyszkowski, Christine
Xi Di, Shen
Yu, Lina
Zhinuo, Ding

APPENDIX FOUR: PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE

[Date]



UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

Tasmanian Conservatorium of

Music

GPO Box 252-63

Hobart

Tasmania 7001

Marina Phillips

Associate Lecturer in Music (Violin)

Ph (03) 6226 7309 Fax. (03) 6226 7333

E-mail: mphilli@utas.edu.au

Dear [name]

I am a Doctor of Philosophy candidate at the Conservatorium of Music, the University of Tasmania, and am writing an exegesis entitled 'An Assessment of the Contribution to Australian String Performance and Pedagogy of Professor Jan Sedivka.' As you have had past involvement with Professor Sedivka, I am seeking your kind assistance to complete the following questionnaire.

If necessary, I am happy to answer any queries arising from the questionnaire. Please circle the correct answer or fill in the spaces provided. If you consider that it is inappropriate to respond to a question please indicate with N/A (not applicable). Please note that included with the questionnaire is an extra copy of the information sheet, and the statement of informed consent, to retain for your records. An envelope is also included for returning the questionnaire, if possible, by Friday August 25.

In anticipation, thank you very much for your time.

Marina L. Phillips

BMus (Hons) MMus (UWA)



UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music
GPO Box 252-63
Hobart
Tasmania 7001
Australia

Professor Jan Sedivka-String Pedagogy
Preliminary Questionnaire
Information Sheet

Primary Investigator- Marina Phillips

Chief Investigator- Catherine Hocking

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary and all procedures have received ethical approval from the University Human Research Ethics Committee. Confidentiality, if desired, to the responses is guaranteed.

Please note that you may be asked to participate in the next stage of the study, by means of an interview. This interview will explore two areas. Firstly you may be asked questions about Jan Sedivka's teaching in key areas of string performance and secondly, you may be asked for a personal reflection on your experiences with Professor Jan Sedivka.

If you have any concerns of an ethical nature or complaints about the manner in which the project is conducted you may contact the Chair or Executive Officer of the University Ethics Committee (Human Experimentation). The Chair is Dr Margaret Otlowski 03 6226 7569 and the Executive officer is Ms Chris Hooper 03 62262 2763.

Enclosed are two copies of the information sheet and the final page of the questionnaire, the statement of informed consent to keep for your own records.



UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

*Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music
GPO Box 252-63
Hobart
Tasmania 7001
Australia*

**Professor Jan Sedivka-String Pedagogy
Preliminary Questionnaire
Information Sheet-Copy**

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1. Musical Background

1a

Name (Do not record if confidentiality is requested)	Date of Birth	Place of Birth (City, Country)

1b Chronologically list your string teachers

Teacher	City	Country	Years
<u>Example</u> George Brown	Perth	Australia	1974-1976

1c List your tertiary qualifications

Institution	Qualification	Years Enrolled	Teacher
<u>Example</u> UWA	BMus	1989-1993	George Brown

2. Professional Experience

2a What is your occupation or profession? (Please circle the correct response)

I. Musician

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Primarily performer | a. soloist
b. free lance performer
c. member of a full-time orchestra
d. member of a full-time chamber ensemble
e. other or combination of above
(Please specify) _____ |
| 2. Primarily pedagogue | a. peripatetic instrumental teacher
b. full time instrumental pedagogue
c. classroom music teacher |
| 3. Combination performer/ pedagogue | a. free lance performer and peripatetic teacher |
| 4. Music/Arts Administrator | |
| 5. University Academic | |
| 6. Composer | |
| 7. Sound Engineer | |
| 8. Music Technician | |
| 9. Music Librarian | |
| 10. Instrument Maker | |
| 11. Piano Tuner | |
| 12. Other (Please specify) _____ | |

II. Other Occupation

1. What is your occupation?

2. What were your reasons for not pursuing a career in the music industry?

2b List your professional performing employment.

Solo/Ensemble/ Orchestra	Country	Status (Casual/Perm)	Position	Years
Example Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra	Australia	Permanent	Concert Master	1980- 1989

2c List any successes in Australian or International performance competitions.

Competition	Year	Result	Works/ Concerto Performed
Example ABC Young Performers	1992	String Finalist	Brahms Violin Concerto, Op 77, d minor

2d List your string teaching employment.

Institution/ Private	City	Country	Level	Position	Years
Example W A Conservatorium of Music	Perth , WA	Australia	Beginners/ Intermediate/ Tertiary	Violin Lecturer	1989-1994

2e List any musical publications, articles, books or editions that you have contributed to the profession.

Type of Publication	Title	Publisher	Year
Example Pedagogical Book	Vibrato and the Young Violinist	Macmillan Publishers	1998

2f List any professional recordings you have made.
(Compact Disc, Video, Record, Television Documentary, Film Score, Other).

Type of Recording	Title	Publisher	Role	Year
Example Compact Disc	Tasmanian Symphony Chamber Players	ABC Classics	Soloist	1998

3. The Sedivka Years

3a What factors led you to study with Professor Jan Sedivka ?

3b Where did you study with Professor Jan Sedivka
(NB You may answer yes to more than one location)

1. Queensland

2. Tasmania

3. Other (Please specify) _____

3c What professional relationship did you have with Professor Jan Sedivka?

1. Student

2. Colleague

3. Student of another instrumental teacher within same institution as Professor Jan Sedivka

4. Other (Please specify) _____

4. Statement of Informed Consent

Jan Sedivka- String Pedagogy Preliminary Questionnaire		
4a	I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet'.	Y/N
4b	The nature of the study has been explained to me in writing.	Y/N
4c	I understand that the study involves the following procedures I. This preliminary questionnaire. II. A possible follow-up interview.	Y/N
4d	I understand that confidentiality of responses is assured, if desired.	Y/N
4e	I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time without prejudice.	Y/N
4f	I am prepared to provide more information, if approached.	Y/N
4g	I am prepared for the information provided in this questionnaire to be published with reference to my name. (If no, please answer question 4h)	Y/N
4h	I am prepared for the information provided in this questionnaire to be published as statistical evidence only, without reference to my name.	Y/N
Name Signed Date		

4. Statement of Informed Consent- Copy

Jan Sedivka- String Pedagogy Preliminary Questionnaire

- 4a I have read and understood the ‘Information Sheet’. Y/N
- 4b The nature of the study has been explained to me in writing. Y/N
- 4c I understand that the study involves the following procedures
- I. This preliminary questionnaire.
- II. A possible follow-up interview. Y/N
- 4d I understand that confidentiality of responses is assured, if desired. Y/N
- 4e I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time without prejudice. Y/N
- 4f I am prepared to provide more information, if approached. Y/N
- 4g I am prepared for the information provided in this questionnaire to be published with reference to my name. (If no, please answer question 4h) Y/N
- 4h I am prepared for the information provided in this questionnaire to be published as statistical evidence only, without reference to my name. Y/N

Name

Signed

Date

APPENDIX FIVE: STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I. Historical

1. Why did you choose to study with Professor Jan Sedivka?
2. What were the years of your involvement with Jan Sedivka?
3. In what capacity was this involvement?
4. Did you have any involvement in a Tasmanian String Summer School? [Year]
5. In what capacity was this involvement?
6. Is there repertoire that stands out in your mind as being representative of your time studying with Professor Jan Sedivka?

II. Subjective

Initial comments

7. Briefly, how would you describe Jan Sedivka's approach to violin pedagogy?
8. Is this style eclectic?

Jan Sedivka's teaching in relation to other pedagogues

9. Do you consider that Jan Sedivka teaches within the framework of a particular method?
10. Do you consider that Jan Sedivka's approach differs from what is considered to be traditional schools of violin pedagogy?
11. How does it differ?

Jan Sedivka's Pedagogical Style

12. When teaching, did you feel that Sedivka had a detailed plan in mind?
13. What would you consider defines Jan Sedivka's teaching?
(Left hand technique, bow technique, musical awareness)

14. What areas of violin technique do you consider to be Jan Sedivka's strongest pedagogical areas?
15. Are there any pedagogical areas that you believe Jan Sedivka considers to be less important?
16. Is there a sound that you believe is characteristic of Jan Sedivka's students?
17. In your experience, has this sound changed over the period of your involvement with Jan Sedivka?
18. In your opinion and experience has Jan Sedivka's teaching style changed?
19. Did Jan Sedivka prescribe technical work?
20. What would you say is Jan Sedivka's view of technique?
21. Did Jan Sedivka prescribe repertoire?
22. Did you see Sedivka teaching other students?
23. Do you think Jan Sedivka's approach varied considerably from student to student?
24. In your experience, was Jan Sedivka's style the same for students of all ethnic and geographical backgrounds?
25. In your experience, was Jan Sedivka's style the same regardless of gender?
26. In your opinion, how did Jan Sedivka motivate?
27. Did Sedivka recommend that you listen to recordings?
28. Did Sedivka teach according to immediate requirements or is there a greater plan?
29. Did Jan Sedivka's use of language have an important influence on his teaching?

Jan Sedivka's Influence on the Individual

30. What do you consider have been Jan Sedivka's most influential contributions to your life in the music industry?
31. Does your own teaching style reflect the influence of Jan Sedivka?

Jan Sedivka's Legacy

32. Do you believe that there have been pedagogical areas that Jan Sedivka has been influential in?
33. What do you consider have been Jan Sedivka's most influential contributions to Australian violin pedagogy and performance?
34. Do you believe that the Tasmanian String Summer School had a significant impact on Australian String Performance and Pedagogy?
35. What do you consider to have been Jan Sedivka's contribution to AUSTA?
36. In your opinion was this contribution influential?
37. What do you consider to have been Jan Sedivka's contribution to the AMEB?
38. In your opinion was this contribution influential?
39. In your opinion, what has made Jan Sedivka so successful?
40. Do you believe that Sedivka's pedagogical 'success' is dependent upon content or context?
41. Please make any additional observations about Jan Sedivka's pedagogical methods. (If applicable)

III. Objective: Key areas of Violin Performance

42. After an examination of the compiled list of Key Areas of Modern Violin Pedagogy, do you feel that any of the areas were of key importance in Jan Sedivka's teaching? What are these and can you describe your memories of his teaching of these areas? (Does this differ from Question 14).

APPENDIX SIX: OBSERVER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I. Historical

1. What were the years of your involvement with Jan Sedivka?
2. In what capacity was this involvement?
3. Did you have any involvement in a Tasmanian String Summer School? [Year]
4. In what capacity was this involvement?
5. Is there repertoire that stands out in your mind as being representative of your time working along side Professor Jan Sedivka?

II. Subjective

Initial comments

6. Briefly, how would you describe Jan Sedivka's approach to violin pedagogy?
7. Is this style eclectic?

Jan Sedivka's teaching in relation to other pedagogues

8. Do you consider that Jan Sedivka teaches within the framework of a particular method?
9. Do you consider that Jan Sedivka's approach differs from what is considered to be traditional schools of violin pedagogy?
10. How does it differ?

Jan Sedivka's Pedagogical Style

11. When teaching, did you feel that Sedivka had a detailed plan in mind?
12. What would you consider defines Jan Sedivka's teaching?
(Left hand technique, bow technique, musical awareness)
13. What areas of violin technique do you consider to be Jan Sedivka's strongest pedagogical areas?

14. Are there any pedagogical areas that you believe Jan Sedivka considers to be less important?
15. Is there a sound that you believe is characteristic of Jan Sedivka's students?
16. Could you identify a student of Jan Sedivka's?
17. In your experience, has this sound changed over the period of your involvement with Jan Sedivka?
18. In your opinion and experience has Jan Sedivka's teaching style changed?
19. Did Jan Sedivka prescribe technical work?
20. What would you say is Jan Sedivka's view of technique?
21. Did Jan Sedivka prescribe repertoire?
22. Did you see Sedivka teaching other students?
23. Do you think Jan Sedivka's approach varied considerably from student to student?
24. In your experience, was Jan Sedivka's style the same for students of all ethnic and geographical backgrounds?
25. In your experience, was Jan Sedivka's style the same regardless of gender?
26. In your opinion, how did Jan Sedivka motivate?
27. Did Sedivka recommend that you listen to recordings?
28. Did Sedivka teach according to immediate requirements or is there a greater plan?
29. Did Jan Sedivka's use of language have an important influence on his teaching?

Jan Sedivka's Influence on the Individual

30. Has Jan Sedivka influenced your life in the music industry?
31. How?
32. Does your own teaching style reflect the influence of Jan Sedivka?

Jan Sedivka's Legacy

33. Do you believe that there have been pedagogical areas that Jan Sedivka has been influential in?
34. What do you consider have been Jan Sedivka's most influential contributions to Australian violin pedagogy and performance?
35. Do you believe that the Tasmanian String Summer School had a significant impact on Australian String Performance and Pedagogy?
36. What do you consider to have been Jan Sedivka's contribution to AUSTA?
37. In your opinion was this contribution influential?
38. What do you consider to have been Jan Sedivka's contribution to the AMEB?
39. In your opinion was this contribution influential?
40. In your opinion, what has made Jan Sedivka so successful?
41. Do you believe that Sedivka's pedagogical 'success' is dependent upon content or context?
42. Please make any additional observations about Jan Sedivka's pedagogical methods and influence. (If applicable)

III. Objective: Key areas of Violin Performance

After an examination of the compiled list of Key Areas of Modern Violin Pedagogy, do you feel that any of the areas were of key importance in Jan Sedivka's teaching? What are these and can you describe your memories of his teaching of these areas? (Does this differ from Question 14)

APPENDIX SEVEN: JAN SEDIVKA INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

I. Historical

Early Life

1. What was the name of your mother and father and what were their geographical origins?
2. How would you characterise your family's economic and social situation?
3. I read that you heard a violinist play in your town as a small boy and wanted to play the violin from this day; what do you remember about this experience?
4. What were your other activities as a youngster?
5. What are your earliest memories of violin tuition?
6. How did this change when you began studying with Sevcik?
7. What do you remember of his methods?
8. What do you remember of your earliest performances?
9. Who were your primary influences with regard to the right arm, and the left hand?
10. Were they the same influences?
11. Was there another influence that you regard as highly significant in your musical life?
12. When and where did you marry Beryl?
13. Why did you decide to move to Australia?
14. How do you envisage your career would have developed if you had remained in the United Kingdom?
15. Which string players of international acclaim have you heard throughout your life?
16. Which left the greatest impression?

Performance

17. With regard to performance, what do you consider have been your most memorable performances?
18. What would you consider to have been the major performances you have given?
19. What were the works?
20. Can you tell me about the Jan Sedivka Chamber Orchestra?
21. How did you feel (in general) before you were to play?
22. How did you feel (in general) as you were performing?
23. How did you feel (in general) after you performed?
24. Does the list below accurately document all works that were written for you and dedicated to you?
25. Do you feel that the repertoire list below accurately reflects your performing career, how does it differ from your teaching repertoire list?
26. Does the list of prizes and awards present here, accurately list all of your documented achievements?

Teaching

27. When and where did you begin your teaching career?
28. Which students travelled with you from England to Australia?
29. Why did they travel with you to Australia?
30. Other than the Rialannah String Quartet, the Petra String Quartet: the only resident Student Chamber Music Group in Australia and the Unitas String Quartet, have you been involved with other influential student chamber music groups?
31. What were some of the outcomes- or have you documented your findings from the 1975 study into audio-visual and kinaesthetic aspects of string playing, funded by the Australian Government?

II. Subjective

Initial comments

32. How would you describe your approach to violin teaching?

33. Is your approach eclectic?

Your teaching in relation to other pedagogues

34. Are you aware of any influence from one of your teachers upon the way you teach today?

35. Do you believe that you teach within the framework of a particular method?

36. How does/ or does this approach differ from traditional schools of violin pedagogy?

37. How does it differ?

Your pedagogical style

38. Do you teach each student with a detailed plan in mind?

39. What would you consider defines your teaching style?

(Left hand technique, bow technique, musical awareness)

40. What areas of violin technique do you consider to be your strongest pedagogical areas?

41. What aspects of your teaching do you consider influential?

42. Are there any pedagogical areas that you consider less important, or less successful?

43. Is there a sound that you believe is characteristic of your students?

44. Has this sound changed over the fifty years or so that you have been teaching?

45. What do you remember of your early teaching methods?

46. Has your teaching style changed?

47. Do you or did you prescribe technical work?

48. Can you describe this.

49. What is your view of technique?

50. Do you have a systemised set of repertoire?
51. Do you or did you prescribe repertoire?
52. Does your teaching style vary considerably from student to student?
53. Do you feel that your teaching varies with regard to the ethnic or geographical background of the student?
54. Describe the differences between teaching students in England compared with in Australia (If there are any).
55. Do you feel that your teaching varies with regard to the gender of the student?
56. What is your view on motivation? What do you believe produces the best results?
57. Do you or did you recommend students listen to recordings?
58. What 'type of student' have you been most successful in producing?
(Soloist, orchestral musician, teacher etc)
59. Have you consciously focused your teaching to produce a 'type of student'?
Do you produce a different 'type of student' at the end of the 90s than you did in the 70s.

Your legacy

60. What do you consider to be the golden years of your influence in Australia?
61. What do you consider have been your most influential contributions to Australian violin pedagogy and performance?
62. Do you believe that your pedagogical 'success' is dependent upon content or context?
63. Would you or have you ever considered documenting in a book your pedagogical thoughts, beliefs and ideas?
64. Do you believe that the Tasmanian String Summer School had a significant impact on Australian String Performance and Pedagogy?
65. What has been your role with AUSTA?
66. What were some of your most influential contributions to this organization?

67. What has been your role with the AMEB?
68. What were some of your most influential contributions to this organization?
69. Which students have you been most successful with?
70. What achievements are you proudest of?
71. Are you content with your career?

III. Objective: Key Areas of Violin Performance

72. After an examination of the compiled list of Key Areas of Modern Violin Pedagogy, do you feel that any of the areas were of key importance in your? What are these and can you describe your beliefs with regard to these areas?

APPENDIX EIGHT: TIME-LINE OF SELECTED AUSTRALIAN STRING MUSICAL DEVELOPMENTS, 1883-1994

Year	Foundation of the ...
1883	Adelaide College of Music
1895	Melba Memorial Conservatorium
1895	University of Melbourne Music Faculty
1897	Elder Conservatorium
1903	Verbrugghen Quartet
1909	Austral String Quartet (1) (Sydney) Cyril Monk, Anton Tschaikov (Violins), Vost Janssen (Viola) and Gladstone Bell (Cello)
1911	Australian Musical News, published by Allans Music (ran until 1963)
1915	Sydney Conservatorium (merged with the University of Sydney in 1990)
1918	Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB)
1918	Sydney Conservatorium High School
1930s	University of Queensland Music Department
1932	Australian Broadcasting Commission
1934	B.Mus course, the University of Tasmania by Arundel Orchard
1936	The Australian Broadcasting Commission's decision to place permanent Symphony Orchestra in each Australian state
1940	Origins of the ABC Instrumental and Vocal competition (a concerto competition run by Bernard Heinze in Victoria) (Renamed Young Performers' Award in 1988)
1945	Musica Viva (by Richard Goldner)
1945	The beginnings of Arts Councils in each state of Australia

- 1946 State Government of NSW and the Council of the City of Sydney co-operated with the ABC in subsidising a 82 piece orchestra- mostly full time players
- 1947 Queensland Symphony Orchestra (55 full time players)
- 1948 Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra
- 1948 Youth Music Australia, National Music Camp, Australian Youth Orchestra
- 1952 Newcastle Conservatorium
- 1953 Festival of Perth
- 1956 Queensland Conservatorium of Music
(affiliated with Griffith University since 1991)
- 1958 Austral String Quartet (2) (Sydney)
Donald Hazelwood, Ronald Ryder (d 1974) then Peter Ashley (Violins), Ronald Cragg (Viola) and Gregory Elmaloglou (Cello)
- 1959 Elder Trio
Ladislav Jasek (Violin), Lance Dossor (Piano) and James Whitehead (Cello)
- 1959 Fellowship of Australian Composers Lectureship of Music at University of Tasmania
- 1959 University of Western Australia Music Department
- 1960 Adelaide Festival
- 1965 Canberra School of Music
- 1965 Tasmanian School of Music
- 1965 Monash University
- 1966 Tasmanian School of Music became the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music
- 1966 Queensland Youth Orchestra
- 1966 Sydney String Quartet
Harry Curby, Robert Pikler (Violins) Robert Ingram (Viola), John Painter (Cello)

1967	Australian Society for Music Education
1967	Elizabethan Theatre Trust Orchestra (Sydney)
1967	Melbourne Youth Music Council (renamed Melbourne Youth Orchestra in 1972)
1967	National Training Orchestra
1968	Australian Journal of Music Education
1969	Elizabethan Theatre Trust Orchestra (Melbourne)
1973	Petra String Quartet
1973	Rialannah String Quartet
1973	Victorian College of the Arts (affiliated with the University of Melbourne since 1990)
1973	Wollongong Conservatorium
1975	Australian Chamber Orchestra
1975	Australia Council
1975	Australian Music Centre
1975	West Australian Youth Orchestra Association
1976	Adelaide Chamber Orchestra
1976	Australian String Teachers Association (AUSTA)
1976	Sydney Festival
1976	The Seymour Group
1976	Ensemble 1
1978	Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra
1978	West Australian String Quartet
1979	Flederman
1980	Australia Ensemble
1981	Tasmanian Symphony Chamber Players
1983	Central Queensland Conservatorium
1985	Australian String Quartet William Hennessy, Douglas Weiland (Violins), Keith Crellin (Viola), Janis Laurs (Cello)
1985	Geminiani Orchestra
1985	Elysium Ensemble

1985	West Australian Conservatorium of Music
1986	Elision
1986	Melbourne International Festival
1987	Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra
1987	State Orchestra of Victoria (originally Elizabethan Trust Orchestra Melbourne)
1987	Pipeline
1988	Perihelion
1990	Australian Brandenburg Orchestra
1990	Stirling String Quartet
1990	Australian Music Teacher
1991	Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition
1993	Macquarie Trio
1993	Melbourne String Quartet Carl Pini, Gerad van der Weide (Violins), Jane Hazelwood (Viola), Arturs Erzegailis (Cello)
1994	Australian National Academy of Music

)

APPENDIX NINE: LEOPOLD AUER – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Hungarian violinist and teacher, Leopold Auer, was born in Veszprém in 1845 and died in Loschwitz, near Dresden, in 1930. He first studied with the local teacher in Veszprém and subsequently with Ridley Kohné from the Budapest Conservatory, who was also the Concertmaster of the Budapest National Opera. Following this, Auer moved to Vienna to continue his studies with Professor Jacob Dont. (“It was Dont who laid the foundation for the technique which I acquired later on”¹). In 1862, Auer went to Hanover to study with the eminent violinist Joseph Joachim (1831-1907). Auer studied with Joachim for two years before he was invited, in 1868 to take over, violinist, Henri Wieniawski’s teaching position at the Imperial Conservatory in Petrograd, Russia.

Boris Schwartz the author of *The Great Masters of the Violin* noted that “Auer’s distinctive ability to inspire his pupils to their highest potential has been amply demonstrated in numerous instances, and on the instrumental level he was most certainly a first-class pedagogue.”² Auer taught many notable violinists including Mischa Elman, Efrem Zimbalist, Nathan Milstein and Jascha Heifetz.

¹ Leopold Auer, *Violin Playing as I Teach It* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc.), 3.

² Boris Schwarz, *The Great Masters of the Violin*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 83.

APPENDIX TEN: CARL FLESCH – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Carl Flesch was born in Moson, Hungary in 1873 and died in Lucerne, Switzerland in 1944. He studied with Jacob M. Grün, Charles Eugène Sauzay (1809-1901), at the Paris Conservatoire and also with Martin Pierre (Joseph) Marsick (1847-1924). As a performer Flesch made his debut in Vienna in 1895 and in Berlin the following year. He was the leader of the Queen's quartet in Bucharest. In 1905 in Berlin, Flesch gave a series of five historical concerts illustrating the development of violin literature from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. Flesch was also the violinist in a piano trio with Artur Schnabel (1882-1951) and (Jean Otto Eric) Hugo Becker (1863-1941), that won international acclaim. As a teacher, Flesch worked at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin, at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia and at the Lucerne Conservatory. Flesch taught many outstanding violinists including Max Rostal (1905-1991), Alma Moodie (1900-1942), Szymon Goldberg (1909-1993), Henryk Szeryng (1918-1988) and Jeanette Neveu (1919-1949). Boris Schwarz claimed that "Flesch was famous for his classical purity, his impeccable technique, and his intellectual grasp of styles. He was not a 'born' violinist but developed through constant analysis and self-criticism."¹

¹ Boris Schwarz, "Flesch, Carl," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 1980 ed.

APPENDIX ELEVEN: IVAN GALAMIAN – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

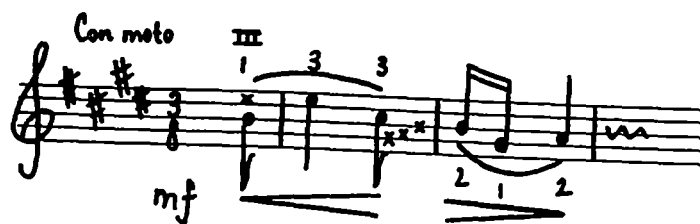
Ivan Galamian was born in Persia (now Iran) in 1903 and died in New York City in 1981. He studied with Professor Konstantin Mostrass (1886-1965) at the School of the Philharmonic Society in Moscow (the school in competition with the Moscow Conservatory). Galamian then moved to Paris where he was a private student of Lucien Capet (1873-1928). As a teacher, Galamian taught at the Russian Conservatory in Paris, at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia and at the Julliard School of Music. In addition to these teaching positions, Galamian founded the Meadowmount Summer Violin School.

It was often said that Galamian “could make a violinist out of a table.”¹ He was considered to be of the old-school authoritarian style of teacher, was dogmatic and created a great sense of order in his students. “Galamian was extraordinary in the way he could teach basic discipline and bring out the maximum ability of a young player.”² He was also known as having a revolutionary technique for the bow arm. Galamian taught many successful violinists including Betty Jean Hagen, Sergiu Luca (b. 1943), David Nadien, Itzhak Perlman (b. 1945), Arnold Steinhardt, Kyung Wha Chung (b. 1948) and Pinchas Zukerman (b. 1948).

¹ Barbara Lourie Sand, *Teaching Genius, Dorothy Delay and the Making of a Musician* (Portland: Amadeus Press, 2000), 58.

² Isaac Stern speaking of Galamian’s teaching in Sand, 55-56.

APPENDIX TWELVE: JÁNAČEK'S VIOLIN SONATA, MOVEMENT TWO, BALLADE, OPENING



APPENDIX THIRTEEN: EXAMPLES OF EFFECTIVE FINGER ORGANISATION

1. *Presto*

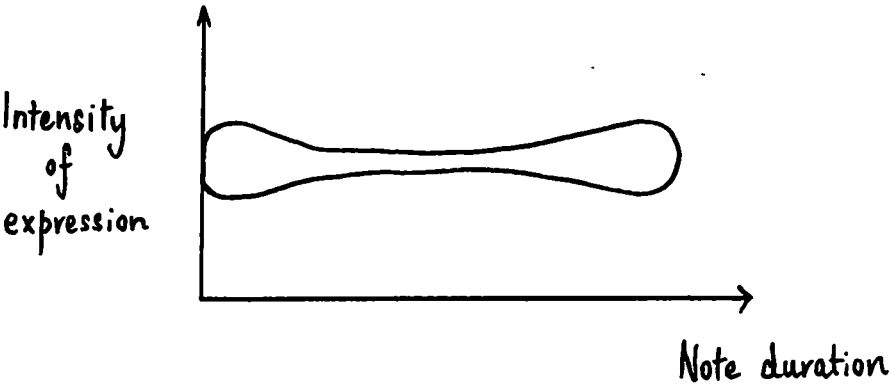
2. *Allegro*

X = Early preparation of notes

Example 1 Beethoven Violin Sonata Op 47, "Kreutzer," III Presto, Bars 30-41

Example 2 Franck Violin Sonata in A Major, II Allegro, Bars 95-97

APPENDIX FOURTEEN: DIAGRAMMATIC REPRESENTATION OF
THE “LIFE OF A NOTE”



**APPENDIX FIFTEEN: SEDIVKA STUDENTS IN TERTIARY STRING
APPOINTMENTS, 2001**

South Australia

Elder Conservatorium of Music, The University of Adelaide

Crellin, Keith

Queensland

School of Music, The University of Queensland

Roberts, Gwyn

Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University

Curro, John

Morgan, Elizabeth

Smith, Kerry

Tasmania

University of Tasmania, Conservatorium of Music

Wojtowicz, Christian

Phillips, Marina

Western Australia

Edith Cowan University, The West Australian Conservatorium of Music

Exton, Peter (Until 2001)

Victoria

Australian National Academy

Exton, Peter

Australian Capital Territory

Canberra School of Music

Fromhyr, Tor

**APPENDIX SIXTEEN: STRING PLAYERS IN A PROFESSIONAL
AUSTRALIAN ORCHESTRA WHO HAVE BEEN STUDENTS OF
SEDIVKA, 2001**

Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

Blades, Margaret	Associate Concertmaster
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Australian Brandenburg Orchestra

Bruce, Matthew	Violin
Phillips, Marina	Associate Concertmaster

Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

Bremner, Kirsty	First Violin
Brockman, Katharine	Principal Viola
Jones, Trevor	Associate Principal Viola
Macindoe, Robert	Associate Principal Second Violin
Shaffir, David	Second Violin
Watkin, Cindy	Viola

Queensland Orchestra

Connolly, Margaret	Violin
Travers, Helen	Violin
Shih, Joan	Violin
Simpson, Graham	Viola

State Orchestra of Victoria

Miller, Mara	Associate Concertmaster
Nixon, Phillip	Violin
Reddington, Martin	Violin

Sydney Symphony Orchestra

Delia Stender, Alexandra	Violin
Ma, Jun Yi	Violin
Huang, Shuti	Violin

Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra

Bremner, Rachel	Violin
Cumming, Doreen	Violin
Johnston, Michael	Violin
Lawson, Christine	Violin
Lazaroff, Susanna	Violin
Lazaroff-Somssich, Alison	Violin
Muldoon, Michael	Violin

West Australian Symphony Orchestra

Drake, Katherine	Viola
Exton, Peter	Associate Concertmaster (until 2001)
Jacks, Lawrence	Principal Viola
Tang, Bao Di	First Violin

APPENDIX SEVENTEEN: BIOGRAPHIES OF FOUR PROMINENT STUDENTS OF JAN SEDIVKA

Margaret Blades

Margaret Blades (b. 1967) studied with Jan Sedivka from 1988 to 1989 when she completed a Graduate Diploma in Music. Before this she obtained a Bachelor of Music Performance at the Elder Conservatorium in Adelaide, studying with violinist Beryl Kimber. In 1993 and 1995 Margaret was a string finalist in the ABC Young Performers competition. Margaret was a permanent violinist with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra in 1992-1993, and in 1994 and 1995 worked with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, respectively. Since 1995 Margaret has held the position of the Associate Concertmaster of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. In 2001, Margaret performed the Lark Ascending by Vaughan Williams, with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

Keith Crellin

Keith Crellin (b. 1949) has had a distinguished career as one of Australia's finest viola players and teachers. As the first violist to win the ABC Young Performers Award in 1972, Keith Crellin soon established himself as one of Australia's leading soloists and chamber music players. Having studied violin initially with Gretchen Schieblich and then Ladislav Jasek at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, he completed his tertiary studies at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music under noted teacher Professor Jan Sedivka. He was a founding member of the Rialannah String quartet, performed with the Petra String Quartet and was a regular member of the Australian Contemporary Music Ensemble. Subsequently he was appointed Lecturer in viola and chamber music at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, Director and principal Conductor of the Conservatorium orchestra and Artistic director and chief conductor of the Tasmanian Youth Orchestra. As well he conducted concerts and recordings with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and has been guest conductor at National and State Music Camps throughout Australia. In 1985, he became a founding member of the Australian String Quartet based in Adelaide, a position he held for sixteen years and with which he performed in many countries, travelled widely throughout Australia and made numerous recordings. Keith Crellin is now head of the String Department and conductor in residence in the Elder School of Music at the University of Adelaide and is widely recognized as a dedicated and inspiring teacher.

John Curro

John Curro (b. 1932) is a name that is associated with fine string playing and teaching in Australia. He was one of Jan Sedivka's first students, upon his arrival in Queensland in 1961. John Curro studied with Sedivka in Queensland and later in Tasmania. He has held teaching appointments at the University of Queensland (1964-67) and the Queensland Conservatorium (1967-1987), where he was a Senior Lecturer and the Head of Strings. John Curro has been a visiting musician at the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music, the Canberra School of Music and the James Cook University.

In addition to his teaching and performing career, John Curro has conducted professional and youth orchestras. In Australia and New Zealand he has conducted the Tasmanian, Adelaide, Melbourne and Christchurch Symphony Orchestras. He has been a conductor and soloist with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra. John Curro has also conducted the Queensland Opera Orchestra and the Queensland Ballet orchestra. Overseas, John Curro conducted the London Virtuosi in France, and Bangkok Symphony Orchestra in Thailand. As an educator John Curro has worked with many youth orchestras including the Australian Youth Orchestra and the youth orchestras in Melbourne, Western Australia and within the New Zealand Secondary Schools' Orchestra Programme. John Curro founded the Queensland Youth Orchestra in 1966 and "received a MBE an AM and a DMus (University of Queensland) for his extraordinary dedication to this organisation."¹

¹ "Queensland Youth Orchestra Council," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, 1997 ed. Warren Bebbington.

Peter Exton

Peter Exton (b. 1961) is the Associate Concertmaster of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, a position he has held since 1995. In addition to teaching appointments at the University of Tasmania (1984-1985) and the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (1987-1989, 1997-1999), he has had an active career as a chamber and orchestral musician. Whilst studying with Professor Sedivka in Tasmania (1984-1985), Peter was the second violinist with the acclaimed Petra String Quartet. He was the second violinist with the Western Australian String Quartet from 1988 to 1989. Orchestrally, Peter was the Associate concertmaster of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in 1990. The following year he freelanced in London and from 1991 to 1995 he was the Co-Principal 2nd Violin of London's Philharmonia orchestra. On his return to in 1996, Peter founded the Australian Piano Quartet (1996-) with Roger Smalley (Piano), Berian Evans (Viola) and Michael Goldshlager (Cello).

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